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JOHN GODFREY'S
FORTUNES;

RELATED BY HIMSELF.

BY BAYARD TAYLOR,
AUTHOR OF "HANNAH THURSTON," ETC., ETC.

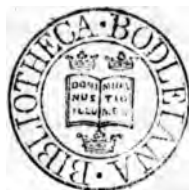
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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JOHN GODFREY'S FORTUNES.



CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH, AFTER THE VISIT OF NEIGHBOUR NILES,
CHILDHOOD SUDDENLY TERMINATES.

I WAS sitting at the front window, buried, chin-deep, in the perusal of "Sandford and Merton," when I heard the latch of the gate click. Looking up, I saw that it was only Neighbour Niles, coming as usual, in her sun-bonnet, with her bare arms wrapped in her apron, for a chat with mother. I therefore resumed my reading, for Neighbour Niles always burst into the house without knocking, and mother was sure to know who it was by the manner in which

the door opened. I had got as far into the book as the building of the Robinson-Crusoe hut, and one half of my mind speculated, as I read, whether a similar hut might not be constructed in our garden, in the corner between the snowball bush and Muley's stable. Bob Simmons would help me, I was sure; only it was scarcely possible to finish it before winter, and then we couldn't live in it without a fireplace and a chimney.

Mother was hard at work, making me a new jacket of grey satinet, lined with black chintz. My reading was interrupted by the necessity of jumping up every ten minutes, jerking off my old coat and trying on the new one — sometimes the body without the sleeves, sometimes one of the sleeves alone. Somehow it wouldn't fit at the shoulders; and the front halves, instead of lying smoothly upon my breast as they should have done, continually turned and flew back against my arms, as if I had been running at full speed. A tailor would have done the work better, it can't be denied; but mother could not afford that. "You can keep it buttoned, Johnny dear,"

she would say, "and then I think it'll look very nice."

Presently the door burst open, and there was Neighbour Niles, voice and figure all at once, loud, hearty, and bustling. Always hurried to "within an inch of her life," always working "like six yoke of oxen" (as she was accustomed to say), she inveterately gossiped in the midst of her labour, and jumped up in sudden spirits of work when she might have rested. We knew her well and liked her. I believe, indeed, she was generally liked in the neighbourhood; but when some of the farmers, deceived by her own chatter, spoke of her as "a smart, *doing* woman," their wives would remark, with a slight toss of the head, "Them that talks the most doesn't always do the most."

On this occasion, her *voice* entered the room, as nearly as I can recollect, in the following style:—

"Good mornin', neighbour! Well, Johnny, how's *he*? Still a readin'? He'll be gittin' too much in that head o' his'n. Just put my bakin' into th' oven—six punkin-pies, ten dried-apple, and eight loaves

o' bread, besides a pan o' rusk. If I had nothing else to do but bake, 't would be enough for one woman : things *goes* in our house. Got the jacket most done ? Might ha' saved a little stuff if you'd ha' cut that left arm more cater-cornered ; 't would ha' been full long, I guess, and there ain't no nap, o' no account, on satinet. Jane Koffman, she was over at Readin' last week, and got some for *her* boys, a fippenny-bit a yard cheaper 'n this. Don't know, though, as it'll wear so well. Laws ! are you sewin' with silk instead o' patent thread ?"

"I find it saves me work," said my mother, as Neighbour Niles popped into the nearest chair, drew her hands from under her apron, leaned over, and picked up a spool from the lap-board. "Patent thread soon wears out at the elbows and shoulders, and then there are rips, you know. Besides, the colour don't hold, and the seams soon look shabby."

I resumed my reading, while our visitor exhausted the small budget of gossip which had accumulated since her last visit, two days before. Her words fell upon my ears mechanically, but failed to make any

impression upon my mind, which was wholly fixed upon the book. After a while, however, my mother called to me—

“Johnny, I think there’s some clearing up to do in the garden.”

I knew what that meant. Mother wished to have some talk with Neighbour Niles, which I was not to hear. Many a time had I been sent into the garden, on the pretence of “clearing up things,” when I knew, and mother also knew, that the beds were weeded, the alleys clean scraped, the rubbish gathered together and thrown into the little stable-yard, and all other work done which a strong inventive faculty could suggest. It was a delicate way of getting me out of the room.

I laid down my book with a sigh, but brightened up as the idea occurred to me that I might now, at once, select the site of my possible Crusoe hut; and take an inventory of the material available for its construction. As I paused on the oblong strip of turf, spread like a rug before the garden door, and glanced in at the back window, I saw that mother

had already dropped her sewing, and that she and Neighbour Niles had put their heads together, in a strictly literal sense, for a private consultation.

The garden was a long, narrow plot of ground, running back to the stable of our cow, and the adjoining yard, which she was obliged to share with two well-grown and voracious pigs. I walked along the main alley, peering into the beds right and left for something to "clear up," in order to satisfy my conscience before commencing my castle or rather hut building; but I found nothing more serious than three dry stalks of seed-radishes, which I pulled up and flung over the fence. Then I walked straight to the snowball bush. I remember pacing off the length and breadth of the snug, grassy corner behind it, and discovering, to my grief, that, although there was room for a hut big enough for Bob and myself to sit in, it would be impossible to walk about, much less swing a cat by the tail. In fact, we should have to take as a model another small edifice, which, on the other side of the bush, already disturbed the needful solitude. Moreover, not a hand's breadth of

board or a stick of loose timber was to be found. "If I were only in Charley Rand's place!" I thought. His father had a piece of woodland in which you might lose your way for as much as a quarter of an hour at a time, with enough of dead boughs and refuse bark to build a whole encampment of huts. Charley, perhaps, might be willing to join in the sport; but he was not a favourite playfellow of mine, and would be certain to claim the hut as his exclusive property, after we other fellows had helped him to build it. He was that sort of a boy. Then my fancy wandered away to the real Crusoe on his island, and I repeated to myself Cowper's "Verses, supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk." Somehow, the lines gave an unexpected turn to my thoughts. Where would be the great fun of playing Crusoe, or even his imitators, Sandford and Merton, in a back garden, where a fellow's mother might call him away at any moment? I should not be out of humanity's reach, nor cease to hear the sweet music of speech; the beasts that roam over the plain (especially Mac Allister's bull, in the next field) would not behold

my form with indifference, nor would they suddenly become shockingly tame. It would all be a make-believe, from beginning to end, requiring even greater efforts of imagination than I had perpetrated a few years earlier, in playing at the village school—

“Here come three lords, all out of Spain,
A courting of your daughter Jane,”

or in creating real terror by fancying a bear crouching behind the briars in the fence corner.

A little ashamed of myself, I walked to the garden paling, and looked over it, and across the rolling fields, to some low, hazy hills in the distance. I belong to that small class of men whose natures are not developed by a steady, gradual process of growth, but advance by sudden and seemingly arbitrary bounds, divided by intervals during which their faculties remain almost stationary. I had now reached one of those periods of growth—the first, indeed, which clearly presented itself to my own consciousness. I had passed my sixteenth birthday, and the physical change which was imminent began to touch and give colour to the operations of my mind. My

vision did not pause at the furthest hill, but went on, eagerly, into the unknown landscape beyond. I had previously talked of the life that lay before me as I had talked of Sinbad and Gulliver, Robert Bruce and William Tell: all at once I became conscious that it was an earnest business.

What must I do? What should I become? The few occupations which found a place in our little village repelled me. My frame was slight, and I felt that, even if I liked it, I could never swing the blacksmith's hammer, or rip boards like Dick Brown, the carpenter. Moreover, I had an instinctive dislike to all kinds of manual labour, except the light gardening tasks in which I assisted my mother. Sometimes, in the harvest-season, I had earned a little pocket-money on the neighbouring farms. It was pleasant enough to toss hay into cocks on the fragrant meadows, but I didn't like the smother of packing it in the steaming mows, and my fingers became painfully sore from binding sheaves. My ambition—at this time but a vague, formless desire—was to be a scholar, a man of learning. How this

was to be attained, or what lay beyond it, I could not clearly see. I knew, without being able to explain why, that the Cross-Keys (as our village was called, from its tavern sign) was no place for me. But, up to the afternoon I have been describing, I had never given the subject a serious thought.

Many a boy of ten knows far more of the world than I then did. I doubt if any shepherd on the high Norwegian fjelds lives in greater seclusion than did we—my mother and myself. The Cross-Keys lay aside from any of the main highways of the county, and the farmers around were mostly descendants of the original settlers of the soil, a hundred and fifty years before. Their lives were still as simple and primitive as in the last century. Few of them ever travelled further than to the Philadelphia market, at the beginning of winter, to dispose of their pigs and poultry. A mixture of the German element, dating from the first immigration, tended still further to conserve the habits and modes of thought of the community. My maternal grandfather, Hatzfeld, was of this stock, and many of his peculiarities, passing over

my mother, have reappeared in me, to play their part in the shaping of my fortunes.

My father had been a house and sign painter in the larger village of Honeybrook, four miles distant. Immediately after his death, which happened when I was eight years old, my mother removed to the Cross-Keys, principally because she had inherited the small cottage and garden from her spinster aunt, Christina Hatzfeld. There was nothing else, for my great-aunt had only a life-interest in the main estate, which—I do not know precisely how—had passed into the hands of the male heirs. My mother's means were scarcely sufficient to support us in the simplest way, and she was therefore in the habit of "taking in sewing" from the wives of the neighbouring farmers. Her labour was often paid in produce, and she sometimes received, in addition, presents of fruit, potatoes and fuel from the kindly-hearted people. Thus we never reached the verge of actual want, though there were times when our daily fare was plainer than she cared to let the neighbours see, and when the new coat or shawl had to be postponed

to a more fortunate season. For at least half the year I attended the village school, and had already learned nearly as much as a teacher hired for twenty dollars a month was capable of imparting. The last one, indeed, was unable to help me through quadratic equations, and forced me, unwillingly, upon a course of mensuration.

Between mother and myself there was the most entire confidence, except upon the single subject of my future. She was at once mother and eldest sister, entering with heart and soul into all my childish plans of work or play, listening with equal interest to the stories I read, or relating to me the humble incidents of her own life, with a sweet, fresh simplicity of language which never lost by repetition. Her large black eyes would sparkle, and her round face, to which the old-fashioned puffs of hair on the temples gave such an odd charm, became as youthful in expression, I am sure, as my own. Her past and her present were freely shared with me, but she drew back when I turned with any seriousness towards the future. At one time, I think, she would have willingly

stopped the march of my years, and been content to keep me at her side, a boy for ever. I was incapable of detecting this feeling at the time, and perhaps I wrong her memory in alluding to it now. God knows I have often wished it could have been so! Whatever of natural selfishness there may have been in the thought, she weighed it down, out of sight, by all those years of self-denial, and the final sacrifice, for my sake. No truer, tenderer, more single-hearted mother ever lived than Barbara Godfrey.

She was so cordially esteemed in our little community that no reproach, on my account, was allowed to reach her ears. A boy of my age, who had no settled occupation, was there considered to be in danger of becoming a useless member of society; antipathy to hard, coarse manual labour implied a moral deficiency: much schooling, for one without means, was a probable evil; but no one had the heart to unsettle the widow's comfort in her child. Now and then, perhaps, a visitor might ask, "What are you going to make of him, Barbara?" whereupon my mother would answer, "He must make him-

self," with a confident smile which put the question aside.

These words came across my mind as I leaned against the palings, trying to summon some fleeting outline of my destiny from the vapoury distance of the landscape. I was perplexed, but not discouraged. My trials, thus far, had been few. When I first went to school, the boys had called me "Bricktop," on account of the auburn tinge of my hair, which was a source of great sorrow until Sam Haskell, whose head was of fiery hue, relieved me of the epithet. Emily Rand, whose blue eyes and yellow ringlets confused my lessons (I am not certain but her pink-spotted calico frock had something to do with it), treated me scornfully, and even scratched my face when it was my turn to kiss her in playing "Love and war." The farmers' sons also laughed at my awkwardness and want of muscle; but this annoyance was counterbalanced in the winter, when they came to measure another sort of strength with me at school. I had an impression that my value in the neighbourhood was not estimated very highly, and had periodical attacks of shyness

which almost amounted to self-distrust. On the other hand, I had never experienced any marked unkindness or injustice; my mother spoke ill of no one, and I did not imagine the human race to be otherwise than honest, virtuous, and reciprocally helpful.

I soon grew tired of facing the sober aspect of reality, so unexpectedly presented, and wandered off, as was the habit of my mind, into vague and splendid dreams. If I had the Wonderful Lamp—if a great roc should come sailing out of the western sky, pick me up in his claws, and carry me to the peaks overlooking the Valley of Diamonds—if there were still a country where a cat might be sold for a ship-load of gold—if I might carry a loaf of bread under my arm, like Benjamin Franklin, and afterwards become rich and celebrated (the latter circumstance being, of course, the result of the former)—there would be no difficulty about my fate. It was hardly likely, however, that either of these things would happen to me; but why not something else, equally strange and fortunate?

A hard slap on a conspicuous, but luckily not a sensitive, portion of my body caused me to spring almost over the paling. I whirled round, and with a swift instinct of retaliation, struck out violently with both fists.

"No, you don't!" cried Bob Simmons (for he it was), dodging the blows and then catching me by the wrists. "I didn't mean to strike so hard, John; don't be mad about it. I'm going away soon, and came around to tell you."

Bob was my special crony, because I had found him to be the kindest hearted of all the village boys. He was not bright at school, and was apt to be rough in his language and manners; but from the day he first walked home with me, with his arm around my neck, I had faith in his affection. He seemed to like me all the better from my lack of the hard strength which filled him from head to foot. He once carried me nearly a quarter of a mile in his arms, when I had sprained my ankle in jumping down out of an apple-tree. He had that rough male nature which loves what it has once protected or helped. Besides, he

was the only companion to whom I dared confide my vague projects of life, with the certainty of being not only heard, but encouraged.

"Yes," said Bob, "I am going away, may be, in a few weeks."

"Where? Not going away for good, Bob?"

"Like as not. I'm nearly eighteen, and Dad says it's time to go work on my own hook. The farm, you know, isn't big enough for him and me, and he can get along with Brewster now. So I must learn a trade; what do you think it is?"

"You said, Bob, that you'd like to be a mason?"

"Wouldn't I, though! But it's the next thing to it. Dad says there ain't agoin' to be many more stone houses built—bricks has got to be the fashion. But they're so light, it's no kind o' work. All square, too; you've just to put one atop of t'other, and there's your wall. Why, *you* could do it, John. Mort! Mort! hurry up with that 'ere hod!"

Here Bob imitated the professional cry of the brick-layer with startling exactness. There was not a fibre about him that shrank from contact with labour, or

from the rough tussle by which a poor boy must win his foothold in the world. I would, at that moment, have given my grammar and algebra (in which branches he was lamentably deficient) for a quarter of his unconscious courage. A wild thought flashed across my mind: I might also be a bricklayer, and his fellow-apprentice! Then came the discouraging drawback.

"But Bob," I said, "the bricks are so rough. I don't like to handle them."

"Shouldn't wonder if *you* didn't. Lookee there!" And Bob laid my right hand in his broad, hard palm, and placed his other hand beside it. "Look at them two hands! they're made for different kinds o' work. There's my thick fingers and broad nails, and your thin fingers and narrow nails. You can write a'most like copy-plate, and I make the roughest kind o' pot-hooks. The bones o' your fingers is no thicker than a girl's. I dunno what I'd do if mine was like that."

I coloured, from the sense of my own physical insignificance. "Oh, Bob!" I cried, "I wish I was

strong! I'll have to get my own living, too, and I don't know how to begin."

"Oh, there's time enough for you, John," said Bob, consolingly. "You needn't fret your gizzard yet awhile. There's teachin' school is not so bad to start with. You'll soon be fit to do it, and that's what I'd never be, I reckon."

We went into the little hay-mow over the stable, and sat down, side by side, in the dusky recess, where our only light came through the cracks between the shrunk clap-boards. Bob had brought a horse to the smith to be shod all round, and there were two others in before him; so he could count on a good hour before his turn came. It might be our last chat together for a long time, and the thought of this made our intercourse more frank and tender than usual.

"Tell me, Bob," said I, "what you'll do after you've learned the trade?"

"Why, do journey-work, to be sure. They get a dollar and a half a day, in Phildelphy."

"Well—after that?"

"Dunno. P'raps I may be boss, and do business on the wholesale. Bosses make money hand-over-fist. I tell you what, John, I'd like to build a house for myself like Rand's—heavy stone, two foot thick, and just such big willy-trees before it—a hundred acres o' land, and prime stock on't; wouldn't I king it, then! Dad's had a hard time, he has—only sixty acres, you know, and a morgidge on it. Don't you tell nobody—I'm agoin' to help him pay it off, afore I put by for myself."

I had not the least idea of the nature of a mortgage, but was ashamed to ask for information. Sometimes I had looked down on Bob from the heights of my superior learning, but now he seemed to overtop me in everything—in strength, in courage, and in practical knowledge. For the first time, I would have been willing to change places with him—ah, how many times afterwards!

When we went down out of the hay-mow it was nearly evening, and I hurried back to our cottage. The fire which I was accustomed to make in the little back kitchen was already kindled, and the table set

for supper. Mother was unusually silent and pre-occupied; she did not even ask me where I had been. After the simple meal—made richer by the addition of four of Neighbour Niles's rusks—was over, we took our places in the sitting-room, she with her lap-board, and I with "Sandford and Merton." She did not ask me to read aloud, as usual, but went on silently and steadily with her sewing. Now and then I caught the breath of a rising sigh, checked as soon as she became conscious of it. Nearly an hour passed, and my eye-lids began to grow heavy, when she suddenly spoke:

"Put away the book, John. You're getting tired, I see, and we can talk a little. I have something to say to you."

I shut the book and turned towards her.

"It's time, John, to be thinking of making something of you. In four or five years—and the time will go by only too fast—you'll be a man. I'd like to keep you here always, but I know that can't be. I musn't think of myself: I must teach you to do without me."

"But I don't want to do without you, mother!" I cried.

"I know it, Johnny dear ; but you must learn it, nevertheless. Who knows how soon I may be taken from you ? I want to give you a chance of more and better schooling, because you're scarcely strong enough for hard work, and I think you're not so dull but you could manage to get your living out of your head. At least, it wouldn't be right for me not to help you what little I can. I have looked forward to it, and laid by whatever I could. Dear me ! it's not what it ought to be, but we must be thankful for what's allowed us. I only want you to make good use of your time while it lasts ; you must always remember that every day is an expense, and that the money was not easy to get."

"What do you want me to do, mother ?" I asked, after a pause.

"I have been talking with Neighbour Niles about it, and she seems to see it in the same light as I do. She's a good neighbour, and a sensible woman. Charley Rand's father is going to send him this

winter to Dr. Dymond's school, a mile the other side of Honeybrook. It's the best in the neighbourhood, and I wouldn't want you to be far away from me yet awhile. They ask seventy-five dollars for the session, but Charley goes for sixty, having his washing and Sundays' board at home. It seems like a heap of money, John, but I've laid away, ever since we came here, twenty dollars out of the interest of the fifteen hundred your father left me, and that's a hundred and sixty. Perhaps I could make out to let you have two years' schooling, if I find that you get on well with your studies. I'm afraid that I couldn't do more than that, because I don't want to touch the capital. It's all we have. Not that you wouldn't be able to earn your living in a few years, but we never know what's in store for us. You might become sickly and unable to follow any regular business, or I——"

Here my mother suddenly stopped, clasped her hands tightly together, and turned pale. Her lips were closed, as if in pain, and I could see by the tension of the muscles of her jaws that the teeth

were set hard upon each other. Of late, I had several times noticed the same action. I could not drive away the impression that she was endeavouring not to cry out under the violence of some mental or physical torture. After a minute or two, the rigidity of her face softened ; she heaved a sigh, which, by a transition infinitely touching, resolved itself into a low, cheerful laugh, and said—

“But there’s no use, after all, in worrying ourselves by imagining what may never happen. Only I think it best not to touch the capital ; and now you know, Johnny, what you have to depend on. There’s the money that I’ve been saving for you, and you shall have the benefit of it, every penny. Some folks would say it’s not wisely spent, but it’s *you* must decide that by the use you make of it. If I can see, every Saturday night when you come home, that you know a little more than you did the week before, I shall be satisfied.”

I was already glowing and tingling with delight at the prospect held out to me. The sum my mother named seemed to me enormous. I had heard of

Dr. Dymond's school as a paradise of instruction, unattainable to common mortals. The boys who went there were a lesser kind of seraphs, sitting in the shade of a perennial tree of knowledge. With such advantages, all things seemed suddenly possible to me; and had my mother remarked, "I expect you to write a book as good as 'The Children of the Abbey;' to make a better speech than Colonel M'Allister; to tell the precise minute when the next eclipse of the sun takes place;" I should have answered, "Oh, of course."

"When am I to go?" I asked.

"It will be very soon—too soon for me, for I shall find the house terribly lonely without you, John. Charley Rand will go in about three weeks, and I should like to have you ready at the same time."

"Three weeks!" I exclaimed, with a joyous excitement, which I checked, feeling a pang of penitence at my own delight, as I looked at mother.

She was bravely trying to smile, but there were tears in her black eyes. One of her puffs fell out of its place; I went to her and put it back nicely, as I

had often done before. I liked to touch and arrange her hair, when she would let me. Then she began to cry, turning away her head, and saying, "Don't mind me, Johnny; I didn't mean to."

It cost me a mighty effort to say it, but I did say—"If you'd rather have me stay at home, mother, I don't want to go. The cow must be milked and the garden looked after, anyhow. I didn't think of that."

"But I did, my child," she said, wiping her eyes with her apron. "Neighbour Niles will take Muley, and give me half the milk every day. Then, you know, as you will not be here on week-days, I shall need less garden-stuff. It's all fixed, and musn't be changed. I made up my mind to it years ago, and ought to be thankful that I've lived to carry it out. Now, pull off your shoes and go to bed."

I stole up the narrow, creaking ladder of a staircase to my pigeon-hole under the roof. That night I turned over more than once before I fell asleep. I was not the same boy that got out of the little low bed the morning before, and never would be again.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIBING MY INTRODUCTION INTO DR. DYMOND'S
BOARDING-SCHOOL.

FROM that day the preparations for my departure went forward without interruption. Mother quite recovered her cheerfulness, both permitting and encouraging my glowing predictions of the amount of study I should perform and the progress I should make. The jacket was finished, still retaining its perverse tendency to fly open, which gave me trouble enough afterwards. I had also a pair of trousers of the same material; they might have been a little baggy in the hinder parts, but otherwise they fitted me very well. A new cap was needed, and mother had serious thoughts of undertaking its construction.

My old seal-skin was worn bare, but even a new one of the same material would scarcely have answered. Somebody reported from Honeybrook that Dr. Dymond's scholars wore stylish caps of blue cloth, and our storekeeper was therefore commissioned to get me one of the same kind from Philadelphia. He took the measure of my head, to make sure of a fit; yet, when the wonderful cap came, it proved to be much too large. "'Twill all come right in the end, Mrs. Godfrey," said the storekeeper; "his head'll begin to swell when he's been at school a few weeks." Meanwhile, it was carefully accommodated to my present dimensions by a roll of paper inside the morocco lining. A pair of kip-skin boots—real top-boots, and the first I ever had—completed my outfit. Compared with my previous experience, I was gorgeously arrayed. It was fortunate that my Sundays were to be spent at home, as a second suit, much less a better one, was quite beyond my mother's means.

Mr. Rand, Charley's father, made all the necessary arrangements with Dr. Dymond, and kindly offered

to take me over to the school in his "rockaway," on the first Monday of November. The days dragged on with double slowness to me, but I have no doubt they rushed past like a whirlwind to mother. I did everything I could to arrange for her comfort during my absence: put the garden in winter trim, sawed wood and piled it away, sorted the supplies of potatoes and turnips in the cellar, and whatever else she suggested—doing these tasks with a feverish haste and an unnecessary expenditure of energy. Whenever I had a chance, I slipped away to talk over my grand prospects with Dave Niles, or some other of the half-dozen village boys of my age. I felt for them a certain amount of commiseration, which was not lessened by their sneers at Dr. Dymond's school, and the damaging stories which they told about the principal himself. I knew that any of them—unless it was Jack Reanor, the tavern-keeper's son—would have been glad to stand in my new boots.

"I know all about old Dymond," said Dave; "he licks awfully, and not always through your trousers,

neither. Charley Rand'd give his skin if *he* hadn't to go. His father makes him."

"Now, that's a lie, Dave," I retorted. (We boys used the simplest and strongest terms in our conversation.) "Old Rand wouldn't let Charley be licked; you know he took him away from our school when Mr. Kendall whacked his hands with the ruler."

"Then he'll have to take him away from Dymond's too, I guess," said Dave. "Wait, and you'll see. May be, there'll be two of you."

I turned away indignantly, and went to see Bob Simmons, whose hearty sympathy was always a healing-plaster for the moral bruises inflicted by the other boys. Bob was not very demonstrative, but he had a grave, common-sense way of looking at matters which sometimes brought me down from my venture-some flights of imagination, but left me standing on firmer ground than before. When I first told him of my mother's plan, he gave me a thundering slap on the back, and exclaimed—

"She's a brick! It's the very thing for you,

Johnny. Come, old fellow, you and me'll take an even start—your head against my hands. I wouldn't stop much to bet on your head, though I *do* count on my hands doin' a good deal for me."

Finally, the appointed Monday arrived. I was to go in the afternoon, and mother had dinner ready by twelve o'clock, so that Mr. Rand would not be obliged to wait a minute when he called. Her plump little body was in constant motion, dodging back and forth between the kitchen and sitting-room, while she talked upon any and every subject, as if fearful of a moment's rest or silence. "It will only be until Saturday night," she repeated, over and over again. How little I understood all this intentional bustle at the time, yet how distinctly I recall it now.

After a while, there was a cry outside of "Halloo, the house!" — quite unnecessary, for I had seen Rand's rockaway ever since it turned out of the lane beyond Reanor's stables. I hastily opened the door, and shouted, "I'm coming!" Mother locked the well-worn, diminutive carpet-bag which I was to take

along, gave me a kiss, saying cheerfully, "Only till Saturday night!" and then followed me out to the gate. Mr. Rand and Charley occupied the only two seats in the vehicle, but there was a small wooden stool for me, where I sat, wedged between their legs, holding the carpet-bag between mine. Its contents consisted of one shirt, one pair of stockings, a comb, tooth-brush and piece of soap, a box of blacking and a brush. I had never heard of a night-shirt at that time. When I opened the bag, afterwards, I discovered two fall pippins and a paper of cakes snugly stowed away in one corner.

"Good-day, Mrs. Godfrey!" said Mr. Rand, squaring himself on his seat, and drawing up the reins for a start; "I'll call on the way home, and tell you how I left 'em."

"I shall be so much obliged," my mother cried. "Do you hear, Johnny? I shall have word of you to-night; now, good-bye!"

Looking back as we drove away, I saw her entering the cottage door. Then I looked forward, and my thoughts also went forward to the approaching school-

life. I felt the joy and the fear of a bird that has just been tumbled out of the nest by its parent, and flutteringly sustains itself on its own wings. I did not see, as I now can, my mother glance pitifully around the lonely room after she closed the door; carefully put away a few displaced articles; go to the window and look up the road by which I had disappeared; and then sink into her quaint old rocking-chair, and cry without stint, until her heart recovers its patience. Then I see her take up the breadths of a merino skirt for Mrs. Reanor, and begin sewing them together. Her face is calm and pale; she has rearranged her disordered puffs, and seems to be awaiting somebody. She is not disappointed: the gate-latch clicks, the door opens, and good Neighbour Niles comes in with a half-knit stocking in her hand. This means *tea*, and so the afternoon passes cheerfully away. But when the fire is raked for the night on the kitchen-hearth, mother looks or listens, forgetting afresh every few minutes that there will be no sleeper in the little garret-room to-night; takes up her lamp with a sigh, and walks wearily into her chamber;

ooks long at the black silhouette of my father, hung over the mantel-piece; murmurs to herself—is it a prayer to Our Father, or a whisper to the beloved Spirit?—and at last, still murmuring words whose import I may guess, and with tears, now sad, now grateful, lies down in her bed and gives her soul to the angels that protect the holy Sleep!

Let me return to my own thoughtless, visionary, confident self. Charley and I chattered pleasantly together, as we rode along; for, although he was no great favourite of mine, the resemblance in our destined lot for the next year or two brought us into closer relations. Being an only son, he had his own way too much, and sometimes showed himself selfish and overbearing towards the rest of us; but I never thought him really ill-willed, and I could not help liking any boy (or girl either) who seemed to like me.

Mr. Rand now and then plied us with good advice, which Charley shook off as a duck sheds water, while I received it in all earnestness, and with a conscientious desire to remember and profit by it. He also

enlarged upon our future places in the world, provided our "finishing" at the school was what it ought to be.

"I don't say what either o' you *will* be, mind," he said; "but there's no tellin' what you *mightn't* be. Member o' the Legislatur'—Congress—President: any man *may* be President under our institootions. If you turn out smart and sharp, Charley, I don't say but what I mightn't let you be a lawyer or a doctor—though law pays best. You, John, 'll have to hoe your own row; and I dunno what you're cut out for—may be a minister. You've got a sort o' mild face, like; not much hard grit about you, I guess—but 't ain't wanted in that line."

The man's words made me feel uncomfortable—the more so as I had never felt the slightest ambition to become a clergyman. I didn't quite know what he meant by "hard grit," but I felt that his criticism was disparaging, contrasted with his estimate of Charley. My reflections were interrupted by the latter saying—

"I'm agoin' to be what I like best, Pop!"

I said nothing, but I recollect what my thoughts were: "I'm going to be what I can; I don't know what; but it will be *something*."

From the crest of a long, rolling wave of farm-land we now saw the village of Honeybrook, straggling across the bottom of a shallow valley, in the centre of which, hard against the breast of a long, narrow pond, stood its flour and saw mills. I knew the place, as well from later visits as from my childish recollections; and I knew also that the heavy brick building, buried in trees, on a rise of ground off to the north-east, was the Honeybrook Boarding School for Boys, kept by Dr. Dymond. A small tin cupola (to my boyish eyes a miracle of architectural beauty) rose above the trees, and sparkled in the sun. Under that magnificent star I was to dwell.

We passed through the eastern end of the village, and in another quarter of an hour halted in a lane, at one end of the imposing establishment. Mr. Rand led the way into the house, Charley and I following, carpet-bags in hand. An Irish servant-girl, with a face like the rising moon, answered the bell, and

ushered us into a reception-room on the right hand of the passage. The appearance of this room gave me a mingled sensation of delight and awe. There was a bookcase, a small cabinet of minerals, two large maps on the walls, and a plaster bust of Franklin on the mantel-piece. The floor was covered with oil-cloth, chequered with black and white squares, and a piece of green oilcloth, frayed at the edges, bedecked the table. The only ornament in the room was a large spittoon of brown earthenware. Charley and I took our seats behind the table, on a very slippery sofa of horse-hair, while Mr. Rand leaned solemnly against the mantel-piece, making frequent use of the spittoon. Through a side-door we heard the unmistakable humming of a school in full blast.

Presently, this door opened, and Dr. Dymond entered. I looked with some curiosity at the Jupiter Tonans whose nod I was henceforth to obey. He was nothing like so large a man as I expected to see. He may have been fifty years old ; his black hair was well streaked with grey, and he stooped slightly. His

grey eyes were keen and clear, and shaded by bushy brows, his nose long and wedge-shaped, and his lips thin and firm. He was dressed in black broadcloth, considerably glazed by wear, and his black cravat was tied with great care under a very high and stiff shirt-collar. His voice was dry and distinct, his language precise, and the regular play of his lips, from the centre towards the corners, suggested to me the idea that he *peeled* his words of any roughness or inaccuracy as they issued from his mouth.

"Ah, Mr. Rand!" he said, bowing blandly and shaking hands. "And these are the boys? The classes are scarcely formed as yet, but we shall soon get them into the right places. How do you do? This is young Godfrey, I presume."

He shook hands with us, and then turned to Mr. Rand, who took out his pocket-book and produced two small rolls, one of which I recognised as that which mother had given to him when we left home. It was "half the pay in advance," in accordance with the terms of the institution. Dr. Dymond signed two

pieces of paper, and delivered them in return, after which he announced—

“I must now attend to my school. The boys may remain in the family parlour until tea, when they will join the other pupils. They will commence the regular course of study to-morrow morning.”

He ushered us across the passage into the opposite room, bade good-bye to Mr. Rand, and disappeared. “Well, boys,” said the latter, “I guess it’s all ship-shape now, and I can go. I want you to hold up your heads like men, and work like beavers.” He shook hands with Charley, but only patted me on the head, which I didn’t like; so, when Charley ran to the window to see him drive down the lane, I turned my back and began examining the books on the table.

There were “Dick’s Works,” and Dr. Lardner’s “Scientific Lectures,” and “Redfield’s Meteorology,” and I don’t know what besides, for, stumbling on Mrs. Somerville’s “Physical Geography,” I opened that, and commenced reading. I had a ravenous hunger for knowledge, and my opportunities for

getting books had been so few that scarcely anything came amiss. Many of the technical terms used in the book were new to me, but I leaped lightly over them, finding plenty of stuff to keep my interest alive.

"I say, Jack," Charley suddenly called, "here's one of the boys!"

My curiosity got the better of me. I laid down the book, and went to the window. A lank youth of about my own age, with short brown hair and sallow face, was leaning against the sunny side of a poplar tree, munching an apple. From the way in which he made the tree cover his body, and the furtive glances he now and then threw towards the house, it was evident that he was not pursuing the "regular course of study." We watched him until he had finished the apple and thrown away the core, when he darted across to the nearest corner of the house, and crept along the wall, under the very window at which we were standing. As he was passing it, he looked up, dodged down suddenly, looked again, and, becoming reassured, gave us an impudent wink as he stole away.

We were so interested in watching this performance that a sharp "Ahem!" in the room, behind us, caused us both to start and blush, with a sense of being accessories in the misdemeanour. I turned and saw an erect, sparely-formed lady of thirty-five, whose clouded grey eyes looked upon me through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. Her hair was brown, and hung down each side of her face in three long curls. Her gown was of a black, rustling stuff, which did not seem to be silk, and she wore a broad linen collar, almost like a boy's, with a bit of maroon-coloured ribbon in front. If I were an artist, I am sure I could draw her entire figure at this moment. It was Miss Hitchcock, as I discovered next day—a distant relative, I believe, of Dr. Dymond, who assisted him in teaching the younger boys, and, indeed, some of the older ones. Her specialty was mathematics, though it was said that she was tolerably well versed in Latin also.

"You are new scholars, young gentlemen, I see," she remarked, in a voice notable, like Dr. Dymond's, for its precise enunciation. "May I ask your names?"

Charley gave his, and I followed his example.

"Indeed! Godfrey? A mathematical name! Do you inherit the peculiar talent of your famous ancestor?"

Her question was utterly incomprehensible to me. I had never even heard of Thomas Godfrey or his quadrant, and have found no reason since to claim relationship with him. I had a moderate liking for abstract mathematics, but not sufficient to be developed, by any possibility, into a talent. Consequently, after stammering and hesitating, I finally answered, "I don't know."

"We shall see," she said, with a patronizing yet friendly air. "How far have you advanced in your mathematical studies?"

I gave her the full extent of my algebra.

"Do you know logarithms?"

Again I was cruelly embarrassed. I was not sure whether she meant a person or a book. Not being able to apply the term to anything in my memory, I at last answered in the negative.

"You will come to them by the regular progressive

path," she said. "Also the differential calculus. There I envy you! I think the sense of power which you feel when you have mastered the differential calculus never can come twice in the course of a mathematical curriculum. I would be willing to begin again, if I were certain that I should experience it a second time." Here she sighed, as if recalling some vanished joy.

For my part, I began to be afraid of Miss Hitchcock. I had never encountered, much less imagined, such a prodigy of learning. I despaired of being able to understand her; how she would despise my ignorance when she discovered it! I afterwards found that, although she was very fond of expatiating upon mathematical regions into which few of the scholars ventured, she was a very clear and capital instructress when she descended to the simpler branches.

Turning from me, she now said to Charley, "Do you share your friend's taste?"

He appeared no less bewildered than myself; but he answered, boldly, "Can't say as I do."

"Come to me, both of you."

She took a seat, and we approached her awkwardly, and with not a little wonder. She stretched forth her hands and grasped each of us by the outer arm, stationed us side by side, and looked from one to another. "Quite a difference in the heads!" she remarked, after a full minute of silent inspection. "Number is not remarkably developed in either; Language good in both; more Ideality here" (touching me on one of the temples); "also more of the Moral Sentiment" (placing a hand on each of our heads). Then she began rubbing Charley's head smartly, over the ears, and though he started back, colouring with anger, she composedly added, "I thought so. Acquisitiveness six plus, if not seven."

We retired to our seats, not at all edified by these cabalistic sentences. She presently went to a book-case, glanced along the titles, and, having selected two bulky volumes, approached us, saying, "I should think these works would severally interest you, young gentlemen, judging from your developments."

On opening mine, I found it to be "Blair's Rhetoric," while Charley's, as I saw on looking over his shoulder at the title, was the first volume of "McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary." For herself she chose a volume of equal size, containing diagrams, which, from their irregular form, I am now inclined to think must have been geological. Charley seemed to be greatly bored with this literary entertainment, and I should probably have been equally so, had I not found couplets and scraps of poetry on turning over the leaves. These kernels I picked out from the thick husks of prose in which they were wrapped, and relished.

The situation was nevertheless tedious, and we were greatly relieved, an hour later, when the dusk was already falling, to hear the loud sound of a bell echoing through the house. Miss Hitchcock rose and put away her book, and we were only too glad to do likewise. The regular tramp of feet sounded in the passage, and presently an immense noise of moving chairs came from the adjoining room on our left. The door of this room opened, and Dr. Dymond

beckoned to us. On entering, we beheld two long tables, at each of which about twenty boys or young men, of all ages from twelve to twenty-four, were seated. Dr. Dymond, placing himself at the head of the first table, pointed out to us two vacant seats at the bottom of the second, which was presided over by Miss Hitchcock. All eyes were upon us as we walked down the room, and I know I was red to the roots of my hair; Charley took the scrutiny more easily. It was not merely the newness of the experience, though that was sufficiently embarrassing—the consciousness of my new clothes covered me awkwardly, from head to foot. I saw some of the boys wink stealthily at each other, or thrust their tongues into their cheeks, and envied the brazen stare with which my companion answered them.

No sooner had we taken our seats than Dr. Dymond rapped upon the table with the handle of his knife. The forty boys immediately fixed their eyes upon their plates, and a short grace was uttered in a loud tone. At its conclusion, the four Irish

maids in waiting set up a loud rattling of cups and spoons, and commenced pitching measures of weak tea upon the table. I was so amazed at the rapidity and apparent recklessness with which they flung the cups down beside the boys, that I forgot to help myself to the plate of cold meat until all the best pieces were gone, and I was obliged to choose between a few fatty scraps. This dish, with some country-made cheese, and a moderate quantity of bread-and-butter, constituted the supper. When Dr. Dymond had finished, he clasped his hands over his stomach, twirling one thumb around the other, and now and then casting a sharp glance at such of the boys as were still eating. The latter seemed to have a consciousness of the fact, for they hastily crammed the last morsels of bread into their mouths, and gulped down half a cup of tea at a time. In a few moments they also crossed their knives and forks upon their plates, and sat erect in their chairs. Thereupon Dr. Dymond nodded down his table, first to the row on his right hand, and then to the row on his left, both of whom rose and retired in the same

order. Miss Hitchcock gave a corresponding signal to our table, and I found myself, almost before I knew it, in the school-room on the other side of the hall. Most of the boys jerked down their caps from the pegs, and rushed out of doors, being allowed half an hour's recreation before commencing their evening studies. With them went Charley, leaving me to look out for myself. Some half-dozen youths, all of them older than I, gathered around the stove, and I sat down shyly upon a stool not far from them, and listened to their talk. Subjects of study, village news, the private scandal of the school, and "the girls," were strangely mingled in what I heard; and not a few things caused me to open my eyes and wonder what kind of fellows they were. I had one comfort, however: they were evidently superior to my former associates at the Cross-Keys.

As they did not seem to notice me, I got up, after a while, and looked out of window at the other boys playing. Charley Rand was already "hail-fellow-well-met" with the most of them. I have never since seen his equal for making acquaintances.

It was not long before a few strokes of the bell hanging under the tin cupola called them all into the school-room. Lamps were lighted, and the Principal made his appearance. His first care was to assign desks to us, and I was a little disappointed that Charley and I were placed at different forms. I found myself sandwiched between a grave, plodding youth of two-and-twenty, and a boy somewhat younger than myself, who had a disagreeable habit of whispering his lessons. At the desk exactly opposite to me sat a boy of eighteen, whose face struck me as the most beautiful I had ever seen, yet the impression which it produced was not precisely agreeable. His head was nobly balanced and proudly carried, the hair black and crisply curling, the skin uniform as marble in its hue, which was a very pale olive, the lips full, short, and scornfully curved, and the eyes large and bright, but too defiant, for his years, in their expression. Beside him sat his physical opposite—a red-cheeked, blue-eyed, laughing fellow of fourteen, as fresh and sweet as a girl, but with an imp of mischief dodging about his mouth, or

lurking in the shadow of his light-brown locks. I had not been at my desk fifteen minutes before he stealthily threw over to me a folded slip of paper, on which he had written, "What is your name?"

I looked up, and was so charmed by the merry brightness of the eyes which met mine that I took a pen and wrote, "John Godfrey. What is yours?"

Back came the answer—"Bill Caruthers."

It was several days before I discovered why he and all the other boys who heard me address him as Bill Caruthers laughed so immoderately. The little scamp had written the name of my grave right-hand neighbour, his own name being Oliver Thornton.

There was no recitation in the evening, so, after a few questions, Dr. Dymond ordered me to prepare for the grammar class in the morning. I attended to the task conscientiously, and had even gone beyond it when bedtime came. The Doctor himself mounted with us to the attic story, which was divided into four rooms, containing six beds each. I had expected to sleep with Charley Rand, and was quite

dismayed to see him go off to another room with one of his new playmates.

I stood, meanwhile, lonely and abashed, with my little carpet-bag in hand, in the centre of one of the rooms, with nine boys around me in various degrees of undress. Dr. Dymond finally perceived my forlorn plight.

"Boys," said he, "which beds here are not filled? You must make room for Godfrey."

"Whitaker's and Penrose's," answered one, who sat in his shirt on the edge of a bed, pulling off his stockings.

The Doctor looked at the beds indicated. "Where's Penrose?" he said.

"Here, sir," replied Penrose, entering the room at that moment. It was my *vis-à-vis* of the school-room.

"Godfrey will sleep with you."

Penrose cast an indifferent glance towards me, and pulled off his coat. I commenced undressing, feeling that all the boys in the room, who were now comfortably in bed, were leisurely watching me. But Dr. Dymond stood waiting, lamp in hand, and I

hurried, with numb fingers, to get off my clothes. "A slim chance of legs," I heard one of the boys whisper, as I crept along the further side of the bed and stole between the sheets. Penrose turned them down immediately afterwards, deliberately stretched himself out with his back towards me, and then drew up the covering. Dr. Dymond vanished with the lamp, and closed the door after him.

My situation was too novel, and—let me confess the exact truth—I was too frightened, to sleep. I had once or twice passed a night with Bob Simmons, at his father's house, but with this exception had always slept alone. The silence and indifference of my bedfellow troubled me. I envied the other pairs, who were whispering together, or stifling their laughter with the bedclothes, lest the Doctor might hear. I tucked the edges of the sheet and blanket under me, and lay perfectly still, lest I should annoy Penrose, who was equally motionless—but whether he slept or not I could not tell. My body finally began to ache from the fixed posture, but it was a long time before I dared to turn, moving an inch at

a time. The glory of the school was already dimmed by the experience of the first evening, and I was too ignorant to foresee that my new surroundings would soon become not only familiar, but pleasant. The room was silent, except for a chorus of deep breathings, with now and then the mutterings of a boyish dream, before I fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH I BEGIN TO LOOK FORWARD.

THE bell in the cupola called us from our beds at the first streak of dawn. The clang awoke me with a start, my sleep having been all the more profound from its delay in coming. For a minute or two I could not imagine where or what I was, and even when the knowledge finally crept through my brain, and I had thrust my spare legs out from under the bedclothes, I mechanically kept my head bent down lest it should bump against the rafters in my garret at home. Penrose, who was already half-dressed, seemed to notice this ; there was a mocking smile on his handsome lips, but he said nothing. The other boys set up such a clatter that I was overlooked, and

put on my clothes with less embarrassment than I had taken them off.

We then went down-stairs to a large shed—an appendage to the kitchen—at the back of the house. There was a pump in the corner, and some eight or ten tin wash-basins ranged side by side in a broad, shallow trough. Four endless towels, of coarse texture, revolved on rollers, and there was much pushing and hustling among the boys who came from the basins with bent, dripping faces, and extended, dripping hands. Towards the end of the ablutions, as the dry spots became rare, the revolution of the towels increased, and the last-comers painfully dried themselves along the edges.

There was a fire in the school-room, but the atmosphere was chilly, and the dust raised by the broom lay upon the desks. My neighbour Caruthers, however, had taken his seat, and was absorbed in the construction of a geometrical diagram. I made a covert examination of him as I took my place beside him. His features were plain, and by no means intellectual, and I saw that his hands were large and hard,

showing that he was used to labour. I afterward learned that he was actually a carpenter, and that he paid for his winter's instruction by the summer's earnings at his trade. He was patient, plodding, and conscientious in his studies. His progress, indeed, was slow, but what he once acquired was never lost. In the course of time a quiet, friendly understanding sprang up between us; perhaps we recognised a similar need of exertion and self-reliance.

After breakfast the business of the school commenced in earnest with me. Dr. Dymond, with some disqualifications, had nevertheless correctly chosen his vocation. Looking back to him now, I can see that his attainments were very superficial, but he had at least a smattering of every possible science, a clear and attractive way of presenting what he knew, and great skill in concealing his deficiencies. Though he was rather strict and exacting towards the school, in its collective character, his manner was usually friendly and encouraging towards the individual pupils. He thus preserved a creditable amount of discipline without provoking impatience or insubordination. He

was very fond of discoursing to us, sometimes for an hour at a time, upon any subject which happened temporarily to interest him; and if the regular order of study was thereby interrupted, I have no doubt we were gainers in the end. He had the knack of exciting a *desire* for knowledge, which is a still more important quality in a teacher than that of imparting it. In my own case, I know, what had before been a vague ambition took definite form and purpose under the stimulus of his encouragement.

With the exception of Miss Hitchcock, there was no regular assistant. One of the oldest pupils took charge of a dozen of the youngest scholars, in consideration (as was surmised in the school), of being received as a boarder without pay. Mrs. Dymond—or Mother Dymond, as the boys called her—was rarely seen, unless a scholar happened to fall sick, when she invariably made her appearance with a bowl of hot gruel or herb-tea. She was a mild, phlegmatic creature, with weak eyes, very little hair on week-days, and an elaborate cap and false front on Sundays. She had no children.

My first timidity on entering the school was considerably alleviated by the discovery that I was not behind any of the scholars of my age in the most important branches. Dr. Dymond commended my reading, chirography and grammar, and gave me great delight by placing me in the "composition" class. I had a blank book for my exercises, which were first written on a slate, and then carefully copied in black and white. The mysteries of amplification, condensation, and transposition fascinated me. I don't know in how many ways I recorded the fact that "Peter, the ploughman, ardently loved Mary, the beautiful shepherdess." I drew the stock comparisons between darkness and adversity, sunshine and prosperity, plunged into antithesis, and clipped away pleonasms with a boldness which astonished myself. Penrose was in the same class. I thought, but it may have been fancy, that his lip curled a little when I went forward with him to the recitation. He looked at me gravely and steadily when my turn came; I felt his eye, and my voice wavered at the commencement. It seemed that we should never become

acquainted. I was too timid to make the least advance, though attracted, in spite of myself, by his proud beauty; and he retained the same air of haughty indifference. At night we lay down silently, side by side, and it was not until the fourth morning that he addressed a single word to me. I heard the bell, but lingered for one sweet, warm minute longer. Perhaps he thought me asleep; for he leaned over the bed, took me by the shoulder, and said, "Get up!" I was so startled that I sprang out of bed at one bound.

I noticed that young Thornton, though a very imp of mischief towards the other boys, never dared to play the least prank upon Penrose. Something had happened between the two, during a previous term, but what it was, none except themselves knew. No one, I was told, could cope with Penrose in muscular strength, yet there was nothing of the bully about him. He was respected, without being popular; his isolation, unlike that of Caruthers, had something offensive about it. I was a little vexed with myself that he usurped so prominent a place in my thoughts: but so it was.

Charley Rand took on the ways of the school at the start, and was at home in every respect before two days were over. I could not so easily adapt myself to the new circumstances, but slowly and awkwardly put off my first painful feeling of embarrassment. Fortunately, before the week was over, another new scholar was introduced, and he served at least to turn the attention of the school away from me. I was older than he by three days' experience—a fact which gave me a pleasant increase of confidence. Nevertheless, the time wore away very slowly; months seemed to have intervened since my parting with my mother, and I was quite excited with the prospect of returning, when the school was dismissed, early on Saturday afternoon.

"Oh, Charley!" I cried, as we passed over the ridge beyond Honeybrook, and Dr. Dymond's school sank out of sight, "only think! in an hour we shall be at home."

"If 'twasn't for the better grub I shall get, Godfrey, I'd as lief stay over Sunday with the boys," said he. He had already dropped the familiar "Jack,"

but this shocked me less than his indifference to the homestead, where, I knew, he was always petted and indulged. It was not long before I, in turn, learned to call him "Rand."

He continually detained me by stopping to search for chestnuts in the edges of the groves, or to throw stones at the squirrels scampering along the top-rails of the fences. Finally I grew impatient, and hurried forward alone, for the houses of our little village were in sight, and I knew mother would be expecting me every moment. I felt sure that I should see her face at the window, and considered a moment whether I should not jump into the next field and cross it to the rear of our garden, so as to take her by surprise. I gave up this plan, and entered by the front-door, but I still had my surprise, for she had not expected me so soon.

"Well, mother, have you been very lonely?" I asked, as soon as the first joyous greeting was over.

"No, Johnny, not more than I expected; but it's nice to have you back again. I'll just see to the kitchen, and then you must tell me everything."

She bustled out, but came back presently with red cheeks and sparkling eyes, moved her chair beside mine, and said, "Now!"

I gave the week's history, from beginning to end, my mother every now and then lifting up her hands and saying, "You don't say so!" I concealed only my own feelings of strangeness and embarrassment, which it was mortifying enough to confess to myself. The account I gave of the studies upon which I had entered was highly satisfactory to my poor mother, and I have no doubt that the pride she felt, or foresaw she should feel, in my advancement, helped her thenceforth to bear her self-imposed sacrifice. My description of Miss Hitchcock's singular questions and phrenological remarks seemed to afford her great pleasure, and I am sure that the picture which I drew of Dr. Dymond's erudition must have been overwhelming.

"I'm glad I've sent you, Johnny!" she exclaimed when I had finished. "It seems to be the right place, and I don't begrudge the money a bit, if it helps to make a man of you. I've been more troubled

this week on your account than my own. Some boarding-schools are rough places for a boy like you, that hasn't been knocked about and made to fight his way. I was afraid I'd kept you too long at home, may be, but I guess you're not spoiled yet—are you?"

"No, indeed, mother!" I cried, jumping up to smooth one of her puffs. How glad I was of the bit of boyish swagger which had so happily deceived her.

We had "short cakes" and currant-jam for supper that night. How cosy and delightful it was, to be sure! I had brought along the book in which my exercises in composition were written, and read them aloud, every one. Poor mother must have been bewildered by the transpositions; perhaps, she wondered what upon earth it all meant; but she said, "And did you do all that yourself?" with an air of serious admiration which made my heart glow. After supper, Neighbour Niles came in, and I must read the exercises all over again for her benefit, my mother every now and then nodding to her and whispering, "All his own doing."

"It's a deal for a boy o' his age," said Neighbour Niles; "though, for my part, I've got so little book-larnin', that I can't make head nor tail of it. Neither my old man nor my boys takes to sich things. Brother Dan'l—him that went out to the backwoods, you know, comin' ten year next spring—he writ some verses once't on the death of 'Lijah Sykes, cousin by the mother's side, that was; but I disremember 'em, only the beginnin':—

"'Little did his parents think, and little did his parents know,
That he should so soon be called for to go.'

If Dan'l had had proper schoolin', he might ha' been the schollard o' the fam'ly. When Johnny gits a little funder, I shouldn't wonder if he could write somethin' about my Becky Jane—somethin' short and takin', that we could have cut on her tombstone. You know it costs three cents a letter."

"Think of that, Johnny!" cried my mother, triumphantly: "if you could do *that*, now! Why, people would read it long after you and I are dead and gone!"

My ambition was instantly kindled to produce, in

the course of time, a "short and takin'" elegy on Becky Jane. This was my first glimpse of a possible immortality. I looked forward to the day when my fame should be established in every household of the Cross-Keys, to be freshly revived whenever there was a funeral, and the inscriptions on the tombstones were dutifully read. Perhaps, even, I might be heard of in Honeybrook, and down the Philadelphia road as far as Snedikersville! There was no end to the conceit in my abilities which took possession of me; I doubt whether it has ever since then been so powerful. When I went into the garden the next morning, I looked with contempt at the little corner behind the snowball-bush. What a boy I had been but a few weeks ago!—and now I was a man, or the next thing to it. I instinctively straightened myself in my new boots, and felt either cheek carefully, in the hope of finding a nascent down; but, alas! none was perceptible. Bob Simmons told me in confidence, the last time we met, that the hostler at the Cross-Keys had shaved both him and Jackson Reanor, and had predicted that he would soon have a beard. I

must wait another year, I feared, for this evidence of approaching manhood.

Bob, I found, was not to commence his apprenticeship until early in the spring. I longed to see him and talk over my school experiences, but I was not thoughtless enough to leave mother during my first Sunday at home, especially as I saw that the dear little woman was becoming more and more reconciled to the change. The day was past in a grateful quiet, and we went early to bed, in order that I might rise by daybreak, and be ready to join Charley Rand.

Thus week after week of the new life went by, until the pangs of change were conquered to both of us. I began to put forth new shoots, like a young tree that has been taken from a barren hill-side and set in the deep, mellow soil of a garden. My progress for a time was astonishing, for all the baffled desires of my later childhood became so many impelling forces. Mother soon ceased to be the oracle she had been ; but I think she felt this (if, indeed, she was aware of it) as one joy the more. Her hope was to look up to and be guided by me. She pos-

essed simply the power of enduring adverse circumstances, not the energy necessary to transform them. In my advancement she saw her own release from a maternal responsibility, always oppressive, though so patiently and cheerfully borne.

The books I required were an item which had been overlooked in her estimate of the expenses, and we had many long and anxious consultations on this subject. I procured a second-hand geometry, at half-price, from Walton, the young man who taught for his board, and so got on with my mathematics ; but there seemed no hope of my being able to join the Latin class, for which three new books were required, at the start. By Christmas, however, mother raised the necessary funds, having obtained, as I afterwards discovered, a small advance upon the annual interest of the fifteen hundred dollars, which was not due until April. This money had been placed in the hands of her brother-in-law, Mr. Amos Woolley, a grocer, in Reading, for investment. She had never before asked for any part of the sum in advance, and I suspect it was not obtained without some difficulty.

Dr. Dymond was too old a teacher to let his preferences be noticed by the scholars, but I knew that both he and Miss Hitchcock were kindly disposed towards me. He was fond of relating anecdotes of Franklin, Ledyard, Fulton, and other noted men who had risen from obscurity, and inciting his pupils to imitate them. Whatever fame the latter might achieve would of course be reflected upon him and his school. The older boys—who were mostly plodding youths of limited means, ambitious of culture—were also friendly and encouraging, and I associated almost exclusively with them. The pranks of the younger ones were no longer formidable, since there was so little opportunity of their practical application to me. I had spirit enough to resent imposition, and my standing as a scholar prevented me from becoming a butt suitable for torment: so, upon the whole, I was tolerably happy and satisfied, even without the existence of an intimate friendship. My childish faith in the truth and goodness of everybody had not yet been shaken.

Punctually, every Saturday afternoon, Charley and

I returned to the Cross-Keys, on foot when the weather was good, and in Mr. Rand's rockaway when there was rain or mud. For three weeks in succession the sleighing was excellent, and then we had the delight of a ride both ways—once (shall I ever forget it?) packed in with the entire Rand family, Emily, Charley, and myself on the front seat, with our arms around each other to keep from tumbling off. Emily was very gracious on this occasion; I suppose my blue cap and grey jacket made a difference. She wore a crimson merino dress, which I thought the loveliest thing I had ever seen, and the yellow ringlets gushed out on either side of her face, from under the warm woollen hood. We went home in the twinkling of an eye, and I forgot my carpet-bag, on reaching the front gate, but Charley flung it into Niles's yard.

I find myself lingering on these little incidents of my boyhood—clinging to that free, careless, confident period, as if reluctant to march forward into the region of disenchantments. The experiences of boys differ perhaps as widely as those of men, but

they float on a narrow stream, and, though some approach one bank and some the other, the same features are visible to all. How different from the open sea, where millions of keels pass and repass day and night, rarely touching the moving circles of each other's horizons—some sailing in belts of prosperous wind, between the tracks of tempest—some foundering alone, just out of sight of the barks that would have flown to their rescue! I must not forget that the details of my early history are naturally more interesting to myself than to the reader, and that he is no more likely to deduce the character of my later fortunes from them than I was at the time. Even in retrospect, we cannot always decipher the history of our lives. The child is father of the man, it is true: but few sons are like their fathers.

The only circumstance which has left a marked impression upon my memory occurred towards the close of the winter. Both Dr. Dymond and Miss Hitchcock were obliged to leave the school one afternoon, on account of some important occurrence at

Honeybrook—I think a funeral, though it may have been a wedding. Walton was therefore placed at the central desk, on the platform, and we were severely enjoined to preserve order during the absence of the principal. We sat very quietly until the Doctor's carriage was seen to drive away from the door, whereupon Thornton, Rand, and a number of the other restless, mischievous spirits began to perk up their heads, exchange winks and grins, and betray other symptoms of revolt. Walton knew what was coming: he was a meek, amiable fellow, sweating under his responsibility, and evidently bewildered as to the course he ought to pursue. He knit his brows and tried to look very severe; but it was a pitiful sham, which deceived nobody. Thornton, who had been dodging about and whispering among his accomplices, immediately imitated poor Walton's expression. The corrugation of his brows was something preternatural. The others copied his example, and the aspect of the school was most ludicrous. Still, there had been no palpable violation of the rules, and Walton was puzzled what to do. To notice the caricature would

be to acknowledge its correctness. He drew his left shoulder up against his ear and thrust his right hand into his back hair—a habit which was known to the school. A dozen young scamps at once did the same thing, but with extravagant contortions and grimaces.

The effect was irresistible. There was a rustling and shaking of suppressed laughter from one end of the school-room to the other—the first throes of an approaching chaos. For the life of me I could not help joining in it, though sympathizing keenly with Walton's painful position. His face flushed scarlet as he looked around the room; but the next instant he became very pale, stood up, and after one or two convulsive efforts to find a voice—which was very unsteady when it came—addressed us.

“Boys,” said he, “you know this isn't right. I didn't take Dr. Dymond's place of my own choice. I haven't got his authority over you, but you'd be orderly if he was here, and he's asked you to be it while he's away. It's *his* rule you're breaking, not

mine. I can't force you to keep it, but I can say you're wrong in not doing it. I'm here to help any of you in your studies as far as I can, and I'll attend to that part faithfully if you'll all do your share in keeping order."

He delivered these sentences slowly, making a long pause between each. The scholars were profoundly silent and attentive. Thornton and others tried a few additional winks and grimaces, but they met with no encouragement; we were waiting to see what would come next. When Walton finally sat down he had evidently little hope that his words would produce much effect; and indeed there was no certainty that the temporary quiet would be long preserved.

We were all, therefore, not a little startled when Penrose suddenly arose from his seat, and said, in a clear, firm voice—"I am sure I speak the sentiments of all my fellow-scholars, Mr. Walton, when I say that we *will* keep order."

The older boys nodded their assent and resumed their studies. Thornton hung down his head, and

seemed to have quite lost his spirits for the rest of the day. But the business of the school went on like clock-work. I don't think we ever had so quiet an afternoon.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINING FEATS IN THE CELLAR AND CONVERSATIONS UPON THE ROOF.

WITH the end of March the winter term of the school came to a close. I had established my position as an apt and rapidly advancing scholar; others had the start of me, but no one made better progress. I had mastered, among other things, geometry and a Latin epitome of sacred history. The mystic words —“*Deus creavit cælum et terram*” —which I had approached with wonder and reverence, as if they had been thundered out of an unseen world, were now becoming as simple and familiar as anything in Peter Parley. Miss Hitchcock, with an air of a queen conferring the order of the Shower-

Bath, promised me Cornelius Nepos and Fluxions for the summer term ; and Dr. Dymond hinted to the composition-class that we might soon try our hands at original essays. Something was said about a debating club. The perspective lengthened and brightened with every forward step.

The close of the term was signalized by a school exhibition, to which were invited the relatives of the pupils and the principal personages in Honeybrook—two clergymen, the doctor, the “squire,” the teacher of the common school, and six retired families of independent means. To most of us boys it was both a proud and solemn occasion. I was bent upon having mother to witness my performance, and hoped she could come with the Rands, but their biggest and best carriage would hold no more than themselves. At the last moment, Neighbour Niles made the offer of an ancient horse and vehicle, which she used for her own occasional visits in the neighbourhood. As the horse had frequently been known to stop in the road, but never, of his own will, to go faster than a creeping walk, it was considered

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safe for mother to drive him over alone and take me home with her for my month's vacation.

At the appointed time she made her appearance, dressed in the brown silk that dated from her wedded days, and the venerable crape shawl which had once covered the shoulders of Aunt Christina. She was quite overawed on being presented to Dr. Dymond and Miss Hitchcock, but made speedy acquaintance with Mother Dymond, and, indeed, took a seat beside her in the front row of spectators. The exercises were very simple. Specimens of our penmanship and geometrical diagrams (which few of the guests understood) were exhibited; we were drilled in mental arithmetic, and answered chemical, pneumatic, hydraulic, and astronomical questions. But the crowning pride and interest of the day was reserved for the declamations, in which at least half the pupils took part. From the classic contents of the "Columbian Orator," we selected passages from Robert Emmet, William Pitt, Patrick Henry, and Cicero; Byron, Joel Barlow, and Milton; Addison, and Red Jacket. Dr. Dymond assigned to me the

part of "David," from Hannah More's dramatic poem. I didn't quite like to be addressed as "girl" by Bill Dawson—the biggest boy in the school, who was Goliath—or to be told to

"Go,
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids :
To wanton measures dance ; and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair ;"

especially as Thornton and the younger fellows snickered when he came to the last line. My hair might still have had a reddish tinge where the sun struck across it, but it was growing darker from year to year. I gave it back to Goliath, however, when it came to my turn to say—

"I do defy thee,
Thou foul idolater !"

or when, dilating into prophecy, I screamed,—

"Nor thee alone—
The mangled carcasses of your thick hosts
Shall spread the plains of Elah !"

I think I produced an effect. I know that mother looked triumphant when I swung a piece of leather with nothing in it, and Bill Dawson tumbled full

length on the platform, occasioning mild exclamations and shuddering among the female spectators ; and I fancied that Emily Rand (in the crimson merino) must have been favourably impressed. I certainly made a better appearance than Charley, who rushed through his share of the debate in the Roman Senate in this wise—

“ My thoughts I must confess are returned on peace.”

The great, the auspicious day of Cato and of Rome came to an end. I said good-bye to the boys : Caruthers was going off to his carpenter-work, and would not return. I liked him and was sorry to lose him. We never met again, but I have since heard of him as State senator in a Western capital. Even the dark eyes of Penrose looked upon me kindly as he shook hands, bestowing a side-bow, as he did so, upon my mother. Miss Hitchcock gave me a parting injunction of “ Remember, Godfrey !—Fluxions and Cornelius Nepos !” and so we climbed into the creaking vehicle and set off homewards.

We might have walked with much more speed and

comfort. The horse took up and put down his feet as gently as if he were suffering from corns; at the least rise in the road he stopped, looked around at us, and seemed to expect us to alight, heaving a deep sigh when forced to resume his march. Then he had an insane desire of walking in the gutter on the left side of the road, and all my jerking of the reins and flourishing of a short dogwood switch produced not the slightest effect. He merely whisked his stumpy tail, as much as to say, "*That* for you!" We reached the Cross-Keys at last, long after sunset; but the abominable beast, who had been so ready to stop anywhere on the way, now utterly refused to be pulled up at our gate, and mother was obliged to ride on to the bars at the end of Niles's lane, before she could get down. Our good neighbour thereupon sallied out and took us in to tea; so the end of the journey was pleasant.

The vacation came at a fortunate time. I succeeded in getting our garden into snug trim: the peas were stuck and the cabbages set out before my summer term commenced; nor were the studies

neglected which I had purposed to continue at home. Bob Simmons had finally left, and I missed him sadly: Rand's great house, whither I was now privileged to go occasionally, with even the attraction of Emily, could not fill up the void left by his departure. I was not sorry when the month drew to an end. The little cottage seemed to have grown strangely quiet and lonely; my nest under the roof lost its charm, except when the April rains played a pattering lullaby upon the shingles; looking forward to Cornelius Nepos and Fluxions, I no longer heard my mother's antiquated stories with the same boyish relish, and something in this new unrest must have betrayed itself in my habits. I never, in fact, thought of concealing it—never dreamed that my mind, in breaking away from the government of home ideas and associations, could give a pang to the loving heart, for which I was all, but which, seemingly, was not all for me.

I returned to Dr. Dymond's with the assured, confident air of a boy who knows the ground upon which he stands. My relations with the principal had been

agreeable from the commencement, and the contact with my fellow-students had long since ceased to inspire me with shyness or dread. I had many moderate friendships among them, but was strongly attracted towards none, except, perhaps, him whose haughty coldness repelled me. I was at a loss, then, to comprehend this magnetism: now it has ceased to be obscure. I was impressed, far more powerfully than I suspected, by his physical beauty. Had those short, full, clearly-cut lips smiled upon me I should not have questioned whether the words that came from them were good or evil. His influence over me might have been boundless, if he had so willed it, but he did not. The tenderer shoots of feeling were nipped as fast as they were put forth. He was always just and considerate, and perhaps as communicative towards myself as towards any of the other boys; but this was far from being a frank, cordial companionship. His reticence, however, occasionally impressed me as not being entirely natural; there was about him an air of some sad, premature experience of life.

Few of the quiet, studious, older pupils remained during the summer, while there was an accession of younger ones, principally from Philadelphia. The tone of our society thus became gay and lively, even romping, at times. I was heartily fond of sport, and I now gave myself up to it wholly during play-hours. I was always ready for a game of ball on the green ; for a swim in the shallow upper part of Honeybrook pond ; for an excursion to the clearings where wild strawberries grew ; for—not at first, I honestly declare, and not without cowardly terrors and serious twinges of conscience—for a midnight descent into the cellar, a trembling groping in the dark until the pies were found, and then a rapid transfer of a brace of them to our attic. The perils of the latter exploit made it fearfully attractive. Had the pies been of the kind which we abominated—dried apple—we should have stolen them all the same. Nay, such is the natural depravity of the human heart, that no pies were so good (or ever have been since) as those which we divided on the top of a trunk, and ate by moonlight, sitting in our shirts.

The empty dishes of course told the tale, and before many days a stout wooden grating was erected across the cellar, in front of the pastry shelves. This device merely stimulated our ingenuity. Various plans were suggested, and finally two of the boldest boys volunteered to descend and test a scheme of their own. They were absent half an hour, and we were beginning to be more amused than apprehensive at their stay, when they appeared with the coveted pies in their arms. They had secreted matches and a bit of candle, found the oven-shovel, and thrust it through the grating, after which it was an easy matter to reach the dish, withdraw the pie perpendicularly, and replace the dish on the shelf. I fancy Mother Dymond must have opened her silly eyes unusually wide next morning.

The enemy now adopted a change of tactics which came near proving disastrous. Thornton and myself were chosen for the next night's foray. We had safely descended the stairs (which *would* creak tremendously, however lightly you stepped), and I, as the leader, commenced feeling my way in the dark

across the dining-room, when I came unexpectedly upon a delicately piled pyramid of chairs. I no sooner touched the pile than down it crashed, with the noise of artillery. Thornton whisked out of the door and up-stairs like a cat, I following, completely panic-struck. I was none too quick, for another door suddenly opened into the passage and the light of a lamp struck vengefully up after us. By this time I had cleared the first flight, and all that Dr. Dymond could have seen of me was the end of a flag of truce fluttering across the landing-place. He gave chase very nimbly for his years, but I increased the advantage already gained, and was over head and ears in bed by the time he had reached the attic-floor. Thornton was already snoring. The Doctor presently made his appearance in his dressing-gown, evidently rather puzzled. He looked from bed to bed, and beheld only the innocent sleep knitting up the ravelled sleeve of care. If he had been familiar with Boccaccio (a thing not to be for a moment suspected) he might have tried the stratagem of King Agilulf with triumphant success. Even the test

which Lady Derby applied to Fenella might have been sufficient. I fancy, however, that he felt silly in being foiled, and thought only of retreating with dignity.

He finally broke silence by exclaiming, in a stern voice, "Who was it?"

Bill Dawson, who had really been asleep, started, rubbed his eyes, and finally sat up in bed, looking red and flustered. The Doctor's face brightened; he moved a step nearer to Bill, and again asked: "Who made the disturbance?"

"I—I'm sure I don't know," Bill stammered; "I didn't hear anything."

"You did not hear? There was a dreadful racket, sir. I thought the house was coming down. It roused me out of my sleep" (as if he had not been watching in the adjoining room!), "and then I heard somebody running up and down stairs. Take care, Dawson, this won't do!"

Bill made a confused and incoherent protestation of innocence, which the Doctor cut short by exclaiming: "Don't let it happen again, sir!" and vanish-

ing with his lamp. Whether he was really so little of a detective as to suspect the first boy whom his voice brought to life, or merely made use of Dawson as a telegraphic wire to transmit messages to the rest of us, I will not decide. At dinner the following day, and for several succeeding days, Bill was furnished, in accordance with private instructions to the waiting-maids, with an immense slice of pie, which he devoured in convulsive haste, Dr. Dymond's sharp eye on him all the time, and Dr. Dymond's thumbs revolving around each other at double speed. It was great fun for us, although it put a stop to our midnight excursions to the cellar.

A few weeks later, however, we found a substitute which was more innocent, although quite as irregular. The weather had become very hot, and our attic was so insufferably close and sultry that we not only kept the window open all night, but kicked off the bed-clothes. Frequently one or the other of us, unable to sleep, would sit in the window and cool his heated body. And so it happened one night, when we were all tossing restlessly and exchanging lamenta-

tions, that Thornton's voice called in to us from the outer air, "I say, boys, come out here ; it's grand."

The roof of the house was but slightly pitched, with a broad gutter at the bottom. Thornton had stepped into this, and walked up to the comb, where he sat in his breezy drapery, leaning against a chimney. The prospect was so tempting that all of us who were awake followed him.

It was a glorious summer night. The moon, steeped in hazy warmth, swam languidly across the deep violet sky, in which only the largest stars faintly sparkled. The poplar-leaves rocked to and fro on their twisted stems and counterfeited a pleasant breeze, though but the merest breath of air was stirring. Stretching away to the south and southwest, the whole basin of the valley was visible, its features massed and balanced with a breadth and beauty which the sun could never give. The single spire of Honeybrook rose in darker blue above the shimmering pearly grey of the distance, and a streak of purest silver was drawn across the bosom of the

pond. Those delicate, volatile perfumes of grass and leaves and earth, which are only called forth by night and dew, filled the air. On such a night, our waste of beauty in the unconsciousness of slumber seems little less than sin.

We crowded together, sitting on the sharp comb (which, gradually cutting into the unprotected flesh, suggested the advantage of being a cherub) or lying at full length on the gentle slope of the roof, and unanimously declared that it was better than bed. Our young brains were warmed and our fancies stimulated by the poetic influences of the night. We wondered whether the moon was inhabited, and if so, what sort of people they were; and finally, whether the lunar school-boys played ball, and bought pea-nuts with their pocket-money, and stole pies.

"By George!" exclaimed one of the composition-class, "that's a good idea! Next week, the Doctor says, we may choose our own subjects to write about. Now I'm going to write about the inhabitants of the moon, because, you know, a fellow can say just

what he pleases, and who's to prove it mayn't be true?"

"I guess I'll write a poem, or a tragedy, or something of that sort," said Brotherton, sticking up one leg into the air as he lay upon his back.

"What is a tragedy?" asked Jones.

"Pshaw! don't you know that?" broke in Thornton, with an air of contempt. "They're played in the theatres. I've seen 'em. Where the people get stabbed, or poisoned, and everything comes out dreadful at the end, it's tragedy; and where they laugh all the time, and play tricks, and get married, and wind-up comfortable, it's comedy."

"But I was at the theatre once," said Brotherton, "and two of them were killed, and he and she got married for all that. I tell you she was a beauty! Now what would you call that sort of a play?"

"Why, a comic tragedy, to be sure," answered Thornton.

"Where do the theatres get them?"

"Oh, they have men hired to write them," Thornton continued, proud of a chance to show his superior

knowledge. "My brother Eustace told me all about it. He's a lawyer, and has an office of his own in Seventh Street. He knows one of the men, and I know him too, but I forget his name. I was in Eustace's office one afternoon when he came; he had a cigar in his mouth; he was a tragedician. A tragedician's a man that writes only tragedies. Comedicians write comedies; it's great fun to know them. They can mimic anybody they choose, and change their faces into a hundred different shapes."

"How much do they get paid for their tragedies?" asked the inquisitive Jones.

"Very likely a hundred dollars a piece," I suggested.

"A hundred dollars!" sneered Thornton; "tell that to the marines! Why, I suppose my brother Eustace could write one a day—he writes like a book, I tell you—and he'd make tragedies quick enough at that price. We had a boy once, in father's store, that swept and made fires, and he went into the theatre for a soldier in the fighting-plays, for two

dollars a week—uniforms found. I should think if a regular tragedician got twenty dollars a week, he'd be lucky."

"Why don't your brother write them?" I asked.

"He? Oh, he *could* do it easy, but I guess it isn't exactly respectable. A lawyer, you know, is as good as any man."

"Shut up, you little fool!" exclaimed a clear, deep voice, so good-humoured in tone, that we were slightly startled, not immediately recognising Penrose, who had come up on the other side of the dormer-window, and was seated in the hip of the roof. His shirt was unbuttoned, and the collar thrown back, revealing a noble neck and breast, and his slender, symmetrical legs shone in the moonlight like golden-tinted marble. His lips were parted in the sensuous delight of the balmy air-bath, and his eyes shone like dark fire in the shadow of his brows. I thought I had never seen any human being so beautiful.

"You forget, Oliver," he continued, in a kindly though patronizing tone, "that Shakespeare was a writer of tragedies."

"I know, Penrose," Thornton meekly answered, "that Shakespeare was a great man. His books are in my brother's library, at the office in Seventh Street, but I've never read any of 'em. Eustace says I couldn't understand 'em yet."

"Nor he, either, I dare say," Penrose remarked.

"Boys," he added, after a pause, "Brotherton has had an idea, and now I've got one. This is a good time and place for selecting our themes for composition. We are in the higher regions of the atmosphere, and where the air expands I shouldn't wonder if the brain expanded too. Moonlight brings out our thoughts. Who'd have supposed that Thornton knew so much about 'tragedicians' and 'comedicians'?"

We all laughed, even Thornton himself, although he wasn't sure but that Penrose might be "chaffing" him. The latter's suggestion was at once taken up, and the themes discussed and adopted. I believe mine was "The Influence of Nature," or something of the kind.

"Why couldn't we get up a Fourth-of-July Cele-

bration among ourselves? We have lots of talent," Penrose further suggested, in a mocking tone; but we took it seriously, and responded with great enthusiasm. We appealed to him as an authority for the order of exercises, each one anxious for a prominent part.

"It might do, after all," he said, reflectively; "they usually arrange it so:—First, prayer; that's Dr. Dymond, of course, always provided he's willing. Then, reading the Declaration; we want a clear, straightforward reader for that."

"You're the very fellow!" exclaimed Thornton. We all thought and said the same thing.

"Well, I shouldn't mind it for once—so you don't ask me to spout and make pump-handles of my arms. That's fixed, we'll say. What's next? Song—'The Star-Spangled Banner,' of course; hard to sing, but four voices will do, if we can get no more. Then the Oration; don't all speak at once! I think, on the whole, Marsh would do tolerably."

"Marsh isn't here," Jones interrupted.

"What if he isn't! Are we to have a school cele-

bration, or only a fi'penny-bit concern, got up by this bare-legged committee, holding a secret session on the academy roof? Let me alone till I've finished, and then say and do what you please. Oration; after that, recitation of What-d'-you-call-him's 'Ode to the American Eagle;' one or two more addresses—short, to give the other Daniel Websters a chance; then we ought to have an original poem, but who'd write it?"

This seemed to us beyond the combined powers of the school. We were silent, and Penrose continued—

"I don't know about that, I'm sure. But it's part of the regular programme—no gentleman's Fourth of July complete without it. If Godfrey would try, perhaps he might grind out something."

"Godfrey?" and "Me?" were simultaneous exclamations, uttered by Jones, Brotherton, and myself.

"Yes, I can't think of anybody else. You could try your hand at the thing, Godfrey, and show it to Dr. Dymond. He'll put a stopper on you if you

don't do credit to the school. There's nothing else that I know of, except a song to wind up with. 'Old Hundred' would do. But before anything more is done, we must let the rest of the boys know ; that's all I've got to say."

While the others eagerly entered into a further discussion of the matter, I rolled over on the roof and gave myself up to a fascinating reverie about the proposed poem. How grand, how glorious, I thought, if I could really do such a thing !—if I could imitate, though at a vast distance, the majestic march of Barlow's "Vision of Columbus!" "Marco Bozzaris" I considered hoplessly beyond my powers. The temptation and the dread were about equally balanced ; but the idea was like a tropical sand-flea. It had got under my skin, and the attempt to dislodge it opened the germs of a hundred others. I had never seriously tried my hand at rhyme, for the school-boy doggerel in which "Honeybrook" was coupled with "funny brook," and "Dymond" with "priming," was contemptible stuff. I am glad that the foregoing terminations are all that I remember of it.

It was long past midnight before the excitement subsided. Two boys, who had meanwhile gone to sleep on their backs, with their faces to the moon, were aroused, and we returned through the window. I got into bed, already linking "glory" with "story," though still tremblingly uncertain of my ability.

"Oh, Penrose," I whispered, as I lay down beside my bed-fellow, "do you really think I can do it?"

"Don't bother me!" was all the encouragement he gave, then or afterwards.

Our airy conclaves were repeated nightly, as long as the warm weather lasted. The boys in the other rooms were let into the secret, and issued from their respective windows to join us. I remember as many as twenty-five, scattered about in various picturesque and sculpturesque attitudes. Dr. Dymond, apparently, did not suspect this new device: if we sometimes fell asleep over our books in the afternoon, the sultry weather, of course, was to blame. We afterwards learned, however, that we had been once or twice espied by late travellers on the neighbouring highway.

The plan of our patriotic celebration matured, and

was finally carried out in a modified form. Our principal made no objection, and accepted our programme, with a few slight changes, such as the substitution of the Rev. Mr. Langworthy, of Honeybrook, for himself, in the matter of the prayer. There was some competition in regard to the orations, but Marsh justified Penrose's judgment by producing the best. No one competed with me, nor do I believe that any one supposed I would be successful. It was a terrible task. I had both ardour and ambition, but a very limited vocabulary, and, unfortunately, an ear for the cadences of poetry far in advance of my power to create them. After trying the heroic and failing utterly, I at last hit upon an easy Hemans-y form of verse, which I soon learned to manage. I was very well satisfied with the result. It was a glorification of the Revolutionary heroes, in eight-line stanzas, with a refrain, which is the only portion of it I can remember.

“Give honour to our fathers' name,
Strike up the glorious lay :
Sound high for them the trump of fame—
’Tis Freedom's natal day !”

"Not bad, not bad," said Dr. Dymond, when he had finished reading this effusion, and I stood waiting, with fast beating heart, to hear his decision. "'Great oaks from little acorns grow,' even if the acorn is not perfectly round. Ha!" he continued, smiling at the smartness of his own remark, "the Academy has never yet turned out a poet. We have two members of Congress and several clergymen, but we are not yet represented in the world of letters. It is my rule to encourage native genius, not to suppress it; so I'll give you a chance this time, Godfrey. Mind, I don't say that you are, or can be, a genuine poet; if it's in you, it will come out some day, and when that day comes, remember that I didn't crush it in the bud. These verses are fair—very fair, indeed. They might be pruned to advantage, here and there, but you can very well repeat them as they are, only changing 'was' into 'were'—subjunctive mood, you know—and 'them' into 'they'—'*did*' understood. The line will read so—

"'If't were given to us to fight as they.'

And, of course, you must change the rhyme, 'Dia-

dem' must come out: put '*ray*' ('of glory,' understood), or *America*—poetic licence of pronunciation. I could teach you the laws which govern literary performances, but it is not included in the design of my school."

Miss Hitchcock would have preferred one of the classic metres, only I was not far enough advanced to comprehend them. She repeated to me Coleridge's translation of Schiller's illustrations of hexameter and pentameter. I thought they must be very fine, because I had not the least idea of the meaning.

When I took the verses home to mother, she thought them almost as good as "*Alcanzor and Zayda*," the only poem she knew. I was obliged to make her an elegant copy, in my best hand, which she kept between the leaves of the family Bible, and read aloud in an old-fashioned chant to Neighbour Niles, or any other female gossip.

When the celebration came off, the effect I produced was flattering. The excitement of the occasion made my declamation earnest and impassioned, and

the verdict of the boys was that it was "prime." Penrose merely nodded to me when I sat down, as if confirming the wisdom of his own suggestion. I was obliged to be satisfied with whatever praise the gesture implied, for I got nothing else.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH BRINGS A STERNER CHANGE IN MY
FORTUNES.

It is scarcely necessary to say that I was both proud and vain of the little distinction I had achieved. My pulse began to flutter with coy expectation whenever any of the boys mentioned the poem, which happened several times during the two succeeding days. I was backward to say much about it myself, but I dearly liked to hear others talk, except when they declared, as Bill Dawson did, "Oh, he got it out of some book or other." It was the author's experience in miniature—extravagant praise, conceit, censure, exasperation, indifference.

Of course, I made other and more ambitious essays.

Several of the boys caught the infection, and for a fortnight the quantity of dislocated metre, imperfect rhyme, and perfect trash produced in the Honeybrook Academy was something fearful. Brotherton attempted an epic on the discovery of America, which he called "The Columbine;" Marsh wrote a long didactic and statistical poem on "The Wonders of Astronomy;" while Jones, in whom none of us had previously detected the least trace of sentiment, brought forth, with much labour, a lamentable effusion, entitled, "The Deserted Maiden," commencing,—

"He has left me : oh, what sadness,
What reflections fill my breast !"

Gradually, however, the malady, like measles or small-pox, ran its course and died out, except in my own case, which threatened to become chronic. My progress in the graver studies was somewhat interrupted thereby, but I prosecuted Latin with ardour, tempted by the promise of Virgil, and began to crave a higher literary culture. I am not sure but that it was a fortunate accident which turned my mind in this direction. The course of study at Honeybrook

was neither thorough nor methodical. A piece of knowledge was hacked off this or that branch, and thrown to us in lumps. There was a lack of some solvent or assimilating element, to equalize our mental growth, and my new ambition, to a certain extent, supplied the need.

A week or so after the Fourth, three of us had permission to go to Honeybrook during the noon recess. My errand was to buy a lead pencil for three cents, and Thornton's to spend his liberal supply of pocket-money in pea-nuts and candy, which he generously shared with us. As we were returning up the main street, we paused to look at a new brick house—an unusual sight in the quiet village—the walls of which had just reached the second story. A ringing cry of "Mort!" at the same moment came from an active workman, who was running up one of the corners. I recognised the voice, and cried out in great joy, "Bob! oh, Bob, is that you?"

He dropped his trowel, drew his dusty sleeve across his brow to clear his eyes from the streaming sweat, and looked down. The dear old fellow! What a grin

of genuine delight spread over his face! "Blast me if't isn't John!" he cried. "Why, John, how're you gettin' on?"

"Oh, finely, Bob," I answered. "May I come up there and shake hands with you?"

"No; I'll come down."

He was down the gangway in three leaps, and gave me a crushing grip of his hard, brick-dusted hand. "I've only got a minute," he said; "the boss is comin' up the street. How you've growed! and I hear you're a famous scholar already. Well—you're at your trade, and I'm at mine. I like it better'n I thought I would. I can lay, and p'int, and run up corners, quite smart. *That's* my corner; isn't it pretty tolerable straight?"

I looked at it with the eye of a connoisseur, and remarked, "It's very well done, indeed, Bob."

"Well, good-bye. I've got another thousand to lay before I knock off. Take care of yourself!"

He was back on the scaffold in no time. My two companions, standing beside me, had witnessed our interview with curiosity; so I said, by way of explanation,

as we moved on, "It's Bob Simmons; he's a first-rate fellow."

"A relation of yours, Godfrey?" asked Thornton, rather impertinently,

"Oh, no! I wish he was. I have no relations except mother, and my uncle and aunt in Reading."

"I've got lots," Thornton asserted. "Six—no, five uncles and six aunts, and no end of cousins. I don't think a fellow's worth much that hasn't got relations. Where are you going to get your money, if they don't leave it to you?"

"I must earn mine," I said, though, I am ashamed to say, with a secret feeling of humiliation, as I contrasted my dependence with Thornton's assured position.

"Earn?" sneered Thornton. "You'll be no better than that bricklayer. Catch me earning the money I spend; I'm going to be a gentleman!"

I might here pause in the reminiscences of my school-days, and point a moral from poor Thornton's after-fate—but to what end? Some destinies are congenital, and cut their way straight through all

the circumstances of life : their end is involved in their beginning. Let me remember only the blooming face, the laughing eyes, and the sunny locks, nor imagine that later picture, which, thank God ! *I* did not see.

Thornton did not fail to describe my interview with Bob, with his own embellishments, after our return ; and some of the boys, seeing that I was annoyed, tormented me with ironical references to my friend. The annoyance was less, however, than it would have been in a more aristocratic school, for we had not only sons of farmers, but sometimes actual mechanics, among us. It was rumoured, indeed, that Dr. Dymond, now LL.D., of the Lackawanna University, had commenced life as a chairmaker in Connecticut.

So my school-life went on. The summer passed away, and the autumn, and the second winter. My mental growth was so evident, that, although the expenses of the school proved to be considerably more than had been estimated, my mother could not think of abridging the full time she had assigned to my studies. The money was forthcoming, and she

refused to tell me whence it came. "You shall help me to pay it back, Johnny," was all she would say.

I believed, at least, that she was not overtasking her own strength in the effort to earn it. There was but limited employment for her needle in so insignificant a place as the Cross-Keys; and she was, moreover, unable at this time to do as much as formerly. The bright colour, I could not help noticing, had faded from her face, and was replaced by a livid, waxen hue; thick streaks of grey appeared in her dark puffs, and her round forehead, once so smooth, began to show lines which hinted at concealed suffering. She confessed, indeed, that she had "spells of weakness" now and then; "but," she added, with a smile which reassured me, "it's nothing more than I've been expecting. We old people are subject to such things. There's Neighbour Niles, now: to hear her talk you would think she never had a well day in her life, yet what a deal of work she does!"

This was true. Our good neighbour was never free from some kind of "misery," as she expressively termed it. One day she would have it in the small

of the back ; then it would mount to a spot between the shoulder-blades ; next, perhaps, she would find it in her legs or elbows, or even on the top of her head. After a day of hard scrubbing, she would run over to our cottage, drop into mother's rocking-chair, and exclaim, "I feel powerful weak ; the misery's just got into every bone o' my body."

Thus, though at times I noticed with apprehension the change in my mother's appearance, the feeling was speedily dismissed. My own prospects were so secure, so glowing, that any shadow of unwelcome change took from them an illuminated edge as it approached. But there came, in the beginning of summer, one Sunday, when a strange, restless spirit seemed to have entered the cottage. Every incident of that day is burned upon my memory in characters so legible that to recall them brings back my own uncomprehended pain. The day was hot and cloudless : every plant, bush, and tree rejoiced in the perfect beauty of its new foliage. The air was filled, not with any distinct fragrance, but with a soft, all-pervading smell of life. Bees were everywhere—in

the locust-blossoms, in the starry tulip-trees, on the opening pinks and sweet-williams of the garden; and the cat-bird sang from a bursting throat, on his perch among the reddening mayduke cherries. The harmony of such a day is so exquisite that the discord of a mood which cannot receive and become a portion of it is a torture scarcely to be borne.

This torture I first endured on that day. What I feared—whether, in fact, I *did* fear—I could not tell. A vague, smothering weight lay upon my heart, and, though I could not doubt that mother shared the same intolerable anxiety, it offered no form sufficiently tangible for expression. She insisted on my reading from the Psalms, as usual when we did not go to church, but interrupted me every few minutes by rising from her seat and going into her own room, or the kitchen, or the garden, without any clear reason. Sometimes I caught her looking at me with eyes that so positively *spoke* that I asked, involuntarily, “Mother, did you say anything?” Then a faint colour would come into

her face, which had lost none of its roundness, so that she suddenly seemed to be her old, bright, cheerful self.

"I believe I *was* going to say something, Johnny," she would answer, "but it can't make much odds what it was, for I've forgotten it already."

As the day wore on, her restlessness increased. When it was necessary for her to leave the room, on some household errand, she would call to me, soon afterwards, "Johnny, are you there?" or come back to the room in flushed haste, as if fearful of some impending catastrophe. She prepared our tea with a feverish hurry, talking all the time of my hunger (though I had not the least) and my appetite, and how pleasant it was to have me there, and how she always looked forward to Sunday evening, and how fast the time had gone by, to be sure, since I first went to Dr. Dymond's school, and what progress I had made, and she wished she could send me to college, but it couldn't be—no, there was no use in thinking of it—with such earnestness and so many

repetitions that I became at last quite confused. Yet, when we sat down to the table she became silent, and her face resumed its waxen pallor.

During the evening she still talked about the school, and what I should do the following winter, after leaving it. "Perhaps Dr. Dymond might want an assistant," she said. "You're young, John, it's true, but I should think you could do as well as Walton, and then you could still study between whiles. I wouldn't have you mention it—the idea just came into my head, that's all. If you were only two years older! I'm sure I'd keep you there longer if I could, but——"

"Don't think of that, mother!" I interrupted; "we really can't afford it."

"No, we can't," she sighed, "not even if I was to give up the cottage and go somewhere as house-keeper. I did think of that once, but it's too late. Well, you'll have the two years I promised you, Johnny."

Much more she said to the same purport, interrupting herself every now and then with, "Stop,

there was something else I had to say!"—which, when recalled, generally proved to be something already mentioned.

When I went to bed, I lay awake for a long time, trying to explain the singular unrest which had come upon the house. It finally occurred to me that mother had probably gotten into some trouble on account of the expense of my schooling. I could hear her, in the room below me, walking about uneasily, opening and shutting drawers, talking to herself, it seemed. Once or twice something like a smothered groan reached my ear. I resolved that the following Sunday should not go by without my knowing to what extent she had drawn upon her resources for my sake, and that the drain should be stopped, even if I had to give up the remainder of my summer term. After congratulating myself on this heroic resolution, I fell asleep.

When I came down-stairs in the morning, I found that breakfast was already prepared. Mother seemed to have recovered from her restless, excited condition,

but her eyelids were heavy and red. She confessed that she had passed a sleepless night. When I heard Charley Rand's hail from the road, I kissed her and said good-bye. She returned my kiss silently, and went quietly into her bedroom as I passed out of the door.

The vague weight at my heart left me that morning, to return and torment me during the next two days. It was but a formless shadow—the very ghost of a phantom—but it clung to and dulled every operation of my mind, muffled every beat of my heart.

Wednesday evening, I recollect, was heavy and overcast, with a dead, stifling hush in the atmosphere. The tension of my unnatural mood was scarcely to be endured any longer. Oh, if this be life, I thought, let me finish it now! There was not much talk in our attic that night: the other boys tumbled lazily into bed, and soon slept. I closed my eyes, but no sleep came. The constriction about my heart crept up towards my throat and choked me. I clenched my hands and ground my teeth;

the muscles of my face twitched, and with a spasm which shook me from head to foot and took away my breath, I burst into a passion of tears. I hid my head under the bed-clothes, and strove to stifle the gasps that threatened to become cries—to subdue the violence of the crisis which had seized me. Penrose was such a quiet bed-fellow that I forgot his presence until I felt that he was turning over towards me. Then, thoroughly alarmed, I endeavoured to lie still and counterfeit sleep: but it was impossible. I could no longer control the sobs that shook my body.

Presently Penrose stirred again, thrust himself down in the bed, and I heard his voice under the clothes, almost at my ear.

“Godfrey,” he whispered, with a tender earnestness, “what is the matter?”

“My mother!” was all the answer I could make.

“Is she sick—dangerous?” he whispered again, laying one arm gently over my shoulder. Its very touch was soothing and comforting.

"I don't know, Penrose," I said at last. "Something is the matter, and I don't know what it is. Mother has a hard time to raise money for my schooling: I am afraid it's too hard for her. I didn't mean to cry, but it came all at once. I think I should have died if it hadn't."

He drew me towards him as if I had been a little child, and laid my head against his shoulder. "Don't be afraid," he then whispered, "no one has heard you but myself. We are all so at times. I recollect your mother; she is a good woman; she reminds me somehow of mine."

My right hand sought for Penrose's, which it held firmly clasped, and I lay thus until my agitation had subsided. A grateful sense of sympathy stole into my heart; the strange mist which seemed to have gathered, blotting out my future, began to lift before a breeze which blew from the stronger nature beside me. At last, with a final pressure, which was answered, I released his hand and turned to my own pillow. Next morning he was silent as ever, but his silence no longer repelled or annoyed me. I was

beginning to learn that the heart lies much deeper than the lips.

In the afternoon Dr. Dymond was called into the reception-room. I paid no attention to this circumstance, for it was of frequent occurrence; but when he opened the door directly afterwards and called "Godfrey!" I started as if struck. Penrose darted a glance of keen, questioning interest across the intervening desk, and I felt that his eye was following me as I walked out of the school-room.

I was quite surprised to find "Old Dave," as we generally called him—Neighbour Niles's husband—waiting for me. He was standing awkwardly by the table, his battered beaver still upon his head.

"Well, Johnny," said he, giving me his hand, which felt like a piece of bark dried for tanning, "are you pretty well? I've come for to fetch you home, because, you see—well, your mother—she's ailin' some, that is, and so we thought the Doctor here'd let you off for a day or two."

"Of course, sir," Dr. Dymond bowed. "Godfrey,

this gentleman has explained to me the necessity of allowing you to be absent for a short time during the term. I sincerely regret the occasion which calls for it. You need not return to the school-room. Good-bye, for the present !”

I took his hand mechanically, ran up-stairs, and brought my little carpet-bag, and was very soon seated at Niles's side bouncing down the lane in a light, open waggon.

“ I took the brown mare, you see,” he said, as we turned into the highway. “ She's too free for the old woman to drive, but she knows my hand. This is Reanor's machine : he lent it to me at once't. Rolls easy, don't it ?”

“ But, Dave,” I cried, in an agony of anxiety, “ you have not told me what has happened to mother !”

He fidgeted uneasily on his seat, addressed various remarks to the brown mare, and finally, when my patience was almost exhausted, said, in a confused way, “ Well, you see, it hasn't jist happened altogether now. 'Pears it's been comin' on a good while

—a year or two, maybe more. The doctor says it ought to ha' been done sooner, but I don't wonder much if she couldn't make up her mind to it."

My distress increased with every one of these slowly-drawled, incoherent sentences. "For God's sake," I exclaimed, "tell me what ails her!"

Dave started at my vehemence, and blurted out the dreadful truth at once. "Cancer!" said he: "they cut it out, yisterday—Dr. Rankin, and Dr. Lott, here, in Honeybrook. They say she bore it uncommon, but she's mighty low, this mornin'."

I turned deathly sick and faint. I could not utter a word, but wrung my hands together and groaned. Dave pulled a small, flat bottle out of his breast-pocket, drew the cork with his teeth, and held the mouth to my lips, saying, "Take a swaller. You needn't say anything about it before the old woman."

The fluid fire which went down my throat partially restored me; but the truth was still too horrible to be fully comprehended. In spite of the glowing June-day, a chill struck to the marrow of my bones,

as I thought of my poor, dear little mother, mangled by surgeons' knives, and perhaps at that very moment bleeding to death. Then a bitter feeling of rage and resistance took possession of my heart. "Why does God allow such things?" cried the inward voice: "why make her suffer such tortures, who was always so pure and pious—who never did harm to a single creature?" The mystery of the past four days was now clear to me: but how blind the instinct that predicted misfortune and could not guess its nature! If mother had but told me, or I had not postponed the intended explanation! It was now too late: I dared not chide her who had endured so fearfully. If any such thought arose, I asked pardon for it of the same God I had accused a moment before. But the Recording Angel does not open his book for the blind words of the young.

Dave had been talking, I suppose, but I was unconscious of his words. Now that the truth had been told, he was ready enough to give all the particulars, and even attempt, in his rough way, to administer consolation.

"You mustn't take on so," he said, patting me on the knee; "maybe she'll get well, after all. While there's life there's hope, you know. Some has been cured that seemed jist about as bad as they *could* be. The wust of cancer is, it mostly comes back agin. It's like Canada thistles: you may dig trenches round 'em, and burn 'em, and chop the roots into mince-meat, and like as not you've got 'em next year, as thick as ever."

His words made me shudder. "Please go on fast, Dave," I entreated; "never mind telling me any more; I want to get home."

"So do I," he answered, urging the mare into a rapid trot. "I didn't much keer to come, but there was nobody else handy, and th' old woman said you *must* be fetched, right away."

As we approached the cottage, Neighbour Niles came out and waited for us at the gate. Her eyes were red, and they began to flow again when I got down from the waggon. She wiped them with her apron, took me by the hand, and said, in a whisper louder than the ordinary voice of most women—

"I'll go in and tell her you're here. Wait outside until I come back. The doctor's with her."

It was not long before she returned, followed by Dr. Rankin. I knew him, from the days of my sprained ankle, and was passing him with a hasty greeting, when he seized me by the arm. "Control yourself, my boy!" said he; "she must not be excited."

I walked into the bedroom. It was very well to say, "Control yourself!" but the sight of my mother, with half-closed eyes, her face as white as the pillow beneath it, so unnerved me that I sank, trembling, upon the chair at the head of the bed, and wept long and bitterly. I felt her fingers upon my hair: "Poor boy!" she sighed.

"Oh, mother!" I cried, "why didn't you tell me?"

"'Twould have done no good, Johnny," she feebly answered. "I was glad to know that you were unconscious and happy all the time. Besides, it's only this spring that I grew so much worse. I tried to bear up, my dear child, that I might see you started in life; but I am afraid it's not to be."

"Don't say that, mother. I can't live without you."

"I have lived ten years without your father, child—and they were not unhappy years. God does not allow us to grieve without ceasing. You will have some one to love, as I have had you. You will soon be a man, and if I should live, it would be to see some one nearer to you than I am. I pray that you may be happy, John; but you will not forget your old mother. When you have children of your own upon your knees, you will talk to them sometimes—will you not?—of the Grandmother Godfrey who died before she could kiss and bless them for your sake?"

Her own tears flowed freely as she ceased to speak, exhausted, and paused to recover a little strength. "I've been blessed," she said at last, "and I must not complain. You've been a good boy, Johnny; you've been a dutiful and affectionate son to me. You're my joy and my pride now—it can't be wrong for me to take the comfort God sends. There would be light upon the way I must go, if I knew that you could feel some of the resignation which I have learned."

“Mother,” I sobbed, “I can’t be resigned to lose you. I will stay with you, and take care of you. I should never have gone away to school — but I thought only of myself!”

Her face was suddenly touched with a solemn beauty, and her gentle voice had a sacred authority which I accepted as if it had truly spoken across the mysterious gulf which was soon to separate us. “My dear child,” she said, “listen to me. I know how you feel in this moment. I can foresee that you may torture yourself after I am gone with the recollection of this or that duty omitted, of some hasty word spoken, perhaps some impatient thought which merely passed through your mind. After your father died, I called aloud, in anguish and prayer, for his spirit to speak down from heaven and forgive me all things wherein I had failed of my duty towards him. But I know now that the imperfections of our conduct here are not remembered against us, if the heart be faithful in its love. If you were ever undutiful in word or thought, the sun never went down and left you unforgiven. Remem-

ber this, and that all I have tried to do for you has been poor payment for the blessing you have always been to me!"

Blessed words, that fell like balm on my overwhelming sorrow! I took them to my heart and held them there, as if with a presentiment of the precious consolation they were thenceforth to contain. I pressed her pale hand tenderly, laid my cheek upon it, and was silent, for it seemed to me that an angel was indeed present in the little room.

After a while, Neighbour Niles softly opened the door, drew near, and whispered, "Mr. Woolley's here—from Readin'—shall I bring him in?"

My mother assented.

I had not seen my uncle for some years, and retained but an indistinct recollection of his appearance. He had been sent for, early in the morning, at my mother's urgent request, as I afterwards learned. When the door opened, I saw a portly figure advancing through the gathering dusk of the room, bend over my head towards my mother, and say, in a husky voice, "How do you feel, Barbara?"

"I am very weak," mother replied. "This is John, Amos. John, shake hands with your uncle, and then leave me for a little while. I have something to say to him."

I rose. A fat hand closed upon mine, and again I heard the husky voice, "Well, really, as tall as this? I had no idea, Barbara."

I do not know whether he was aware of my mother's condition. Perhaps not; but it was impossible for me, at the moment, to credit him with the doubt. To my ear, his words expressed a cruel coldness and indifference; and I went forth from the room with a spark of resentment already kindled in the midst of my grief. I threw myself into my accustomed seat by the front window, and gave myself up to the gloomy chaos of my emotions.

Neighbour Niles was preparing the table for supper, stopping now and then to wipe her eyes, and "sniffing" with a loud, spasmodic noise, which drove me nearly to distraction. My excited nerves could not bear it. Once she put down a plate of something, crossed the room to my chair, and laid

her hand on my shoulder. "Johnny——" she began.

"Let me be!" I cried, fiercely, turning away from her with a jerk.

The good woman burst into fresh tears, and instantly left me. "Them's the worst," I heard her mutter to herself; "I'd rather he'd half break his heart a-cryin'." And, indeed, I was presently sorry for the rude way in which I had repelled her sympathy, though I could not encourage her to renew it.

Supper was delayed, nearly an hour, waiting for my uncle. When he appeared, it was with a grave and solemn countenance. I took my seat beside him very reluctantly: it seemed dreadful to me to eat and drink while my mother might be dying in the next room. Neighbour Niles, however, would hear of nothing else. She had already lifted the tea-pot, in her haste to serve us, when my uncle suddenly bowed his head and commenced a grace. Neighbour Niles was so confused that she stood with the tea-pot suspended in the air until he had finished. I, who

with difficulty swallowed a little tea, was shocked at the appetite he displayed, forgetting that he was human, and that it was a long drive from Reading.

"I am afraid, John," he finally said, "that the Lord is about to chasten you. It is some comfort to know that your mother seems to be in a proper frame of mind. Her ways were never the same as mine, but it is not too late, even at the eleventh hour, to accept the grace which is freely offered. It is not for me to judge, but I am hopeful that she will be saved. I trust that you will not delay to choose the safe and the narrow path. Do you love your Saviour?"

"Yes," I answered — somewhat mechanically, I fear.

"Are you willing to give up everything and follow Him?"

"Uncle Amos," I said, "I wish you wouldn't ask me any more questions." I left the table, and stole quietly into mother's room. As I was passing out of the door I heard Neighbour Niles say, "This is no time to be preachin' at the poor boy."

That night my uncle took possession of my bed in the attic. I refused to sleep, and the considerate nurse allowed me to watch with her. Mother's condition seemed to be stupor rather than healthy slumber. There was no recuperative power left in her system, and the physician had already declared that she would not recover from the shock of the operation. He informed me, afterwards, that the strength of her system had been reduced, for years, by the lack of rich and nourishing food—which circumstance, if it did not create the disease, had certainly very much accelerated its progress. "She was not a plant that would thrive on a poor soil," he said, in his quaint way; "she ought to have been planted in fowl and venison, and watered with port."

The long, long night dragged away, and when the black mass of the lilac-bush at the window began to glimmer in dusky green, and some awakening birds cheeped in the branches of the plum-tree, mother seemed to revive. I was shocked to see, in the wan light, how her round cheeks had already fallen in, and what a ghastly dimness dwelt in her dark eyes.

The nurse administered some stimulating mixture, smoothed the pillow, and, obeying some tender instinct, left us together. Mother's eyes called me to her ; I stooped down and kissed her lips.

"John," she said, "I must tell you now, while I have strength, what your uncle and I have agreed upon. The money, you know, is in his hands, and it is better that he should keep it in trust until you are of age. You are to stay at school until the fall. I borrowed the money of Mr. Rand. There is a mortgage on the house and lot, and the doctors must be paid : so all will be sold, except some little things that you may keep for my sake. When you leave school, your uncle will take you. He says you can assist in his store and learn something about business. Your aunt Peggy is my sister, you know, and it will be a home for you. I couldn't bear to think that you must go among strangers. When you're of age you'll have a little something to start you in the world, and if my blessing can reach you, it will rest upon you day and night."

The prospect of living with my uncle was not plea-

sant, but it seemed natural and proper, and not for worlds would I have deprived the dear sufferer of the comfort which she drew from this disposition of my fortunes. She repeated her words of consolation in a voice that grew fainter and more broken, and then lay for a long time silent, with her hand in mine. Once again she half opened her eyes, and, while a brief, shadowy smile flitted about her lips, whispered "Johnny!"

"I am here, with you, mother," I said, fondling the listless hand.

She did not reply: this was the last sign of consciousness she gave. The conquered life still lingered, hour after hour, as if from the mere mechanical habit of the bodily functions. But the delicate mechanism moved more and more slowly, and, before sunset, it had stopped for ever.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH I DISCOVER A NEW RELATIVE.

WHY should I enter into all the dreary details of the funeral preparations—of those black summer days, which still lie, an unfaded blot, in the soft and tender light of resignation now shining over my sorrow? I passed through the usual experience of one struck by sudden and bitter calamity; my heart was chilled and benumbed by its inability to comprehend the truth. My dull, silent, apathetic mood must have seemed to the shallow-judging neighbours a want of feeling. Only Neighbour Niles and her husband guessed the truth. I saw men and women, as trees, come and go; some of them spoke to me, and when I was forced to speak in turn it was with painful unwillingness. I

heard my voice as if it were something apart from myself; I even seemed, through some strange extraverted sense, to stand aside and contemplate my own part in the solemnities.

When I look back now I see a slender youth, dressed in an ill-fitting black suit, led through the gate in the low churchyard-wall by my uncle Woolley. It is not myself; but I feel at my heart the numb, steady ache of his, which shall outlast a sharper grief. His eyes are fixed on the ground, but I know—for I have often been told so—that they are like my mother's. His hair cannot be described by any other colour than dark auburn, and hangs, long and loose, over his ears; his skin is fair, but very much freckled, and his features, I fancy, would wear an earnest, eager expression in any happier mood. I see this boy as some mysterious double of mine, standing, cold and pale, beside the open grave; but the stupor of his grief is harder to bear, even in memory, than the keen reality to which I afterwards awoke.

I let things take their course, knowing that the circumstances of my immediate future were already

arranged. My uncle Woolley, as my guardian and the executor of my mother's little estate, assumed, without consulting me, the disposal of the cottage and furniture. Mr. Rand purchased the former, as a convenient tenant-house for some of his farm hands, and the latter, with the exception of mother's rocking-chair, which she bequeathed to Neighbour Niles, was sold at auction. This, however, took place after my return to the school, and I was spared the pain of seeing my home broken to pieces and its fragments scattered to the winds. My uncle probably gave me less credit for a practical comprehension of the matter than I really deserved. His first conversation with me had been unfortunate, both in point of time and subject, and neither of us, I suspect, felt inclined just then to renew the attempt at an intimacy befitting our mutual relation.

In a few days I found myself back again at Honeybrook Academy. The return was a relief, in every way. The knowledge of my bereavement had, of course, preceded me, and I was received with the half-reverential kindness which any pack of boys,

however rough and thoughtless, will never fail to accord in like circumstances. Miss Hitchcock, it is true, gave me a moment's exasperation by her awkward attempt at condolence, quoting the hackneyed "*pallida mors*," &c., but Mother Dymond actually dropped a few tears from her silly eyes as she said, "I'm so sorry, Godfrey; I quite took to her that time she was here."

Penrose met me with a long, silent pressure of the hand, and the stolid calm with which I had heard the others melted for the first time. My eyes grew suddenly dim, and I turned away.

I had already profited by nearly two years' experience of human nature, or rather boy nature, and was careful not to let my knowledge of his sympathy lead me into advances which might, notwithstanding all that had happened, be repelled. I had a presentiment that he esteemed me because I imitated his own reticence, and that he was suspicious of any intimacy which did not proceed from himself. In spite of his beauty, which seemed to be dimly felt and respected by the whole school, and the tender spot in

my heart, kindling anew whenever I recalled the night he had taken me to his breast, I was not sure that I could wholly like and trust him—could ever feel for him the same open, unquestioning affection which I bestowed, for example, on Bob Simmons.

In my studies I obtained at least a temporary release from sorrow. The boys found it natural that I should not join in the sports of play-hours, or the wild, stolen expeditions in which I had formerly taken delight. When I closed my Lempriere and Leverett, I wandered off to the nearest bit of woodland, flung myself on the brown moss under some beech-tree, and listened idly to the tapping of the woodpecker, or the rustle of squirrels through the fallen leaves.

There was a little shaded dell, in particular, which was my favourite haunt. A branch of Cat Creek (as the stream in the valley was called) ran through it, murmuring gently over stones and dead tree trunks. Here, in moist spots, the trillium hung its crimson bell-like fruit under the horizontal roof of its three broad leaves, and the orange orchis shot up feathery spikes of flowers, bright as the breast of an oriole.

In the thickest shade of this dell a large tree had fallen across the stream from bank to bank, above a dark, glassy trout-pool. One crooked branch, rising in the middle, formed the back of a rough natural chair; and hither I came habitually, bringing some work borrowed from Dr. Dymond's library. I remember reading there Mrs. Hemans' "Forest Sanctuary," with a delight which, alas! the poem can never give again, even with such accessories.

One day I was startled from my book by hearing the dead twigs on the higher bank snap under the step of some one descending into the glen. I looked up and saw Penrose coming leisurely down, cutting now and then at a wood-moth or dragon-fly with a switch of leather-wood. Almost at the same moment he espied me.

"Holloa, Godfrey! Are you there?" he said, turning towards my perch. "You show a romantic taste, upon my word!"

The irony, if he meant it for such, went no further. The mocking smile vanished from his lips, and his face became grave as he sprang upon the log and

took a seat carelessly against the roots. For a minute he bent forward and looked down into the glassy basin.

"Pshaw!" said he, suddenly, striking the water with his switch, so that it seemed to snap like the splitting of a real mirror—"only my own face! I'm no Narcissus."

"You couldn't change into a flower, with your complexion, anyhow," I remarked.

"Curse my complexion!" he exclaimed; it's a kind that brings bad blood: my father has it too!"

I was rather startled at this outbreak, and said nothing. He too seemed to become conscious of his vehemence. "Godfrey," he asked, "do you remember your father? What kind of a man was he?"

"Yes," I answered, "I remember him very well. I was eight years old when he died. He was quiet and steady. I can't recall many things that he said; but as good and honest a man as ever lived, I believe. If he hadn't been, mother couldn't have loved him so, to the very end of her life."

"I have no doubt of it," he said, after a pause, as

if speaking to himself; "there are such men. I'm sorry you lost your mother—no need to tell you that. You're going to leave school at the end of the term. Where will you go? You have other relations, of course?"

Encouraged by the interest which Penrose showed in my condition, I related to him what had been decided upon by my mother and my uncle, without concealing the unfavourable impression which the latter had made upon me, or my distaste at the prospect before me.

"But you must have other aunts and uncles," he said, "or relatives a little further off. On your father's side, for instance?"

"I suppose so," I answered; "but they never visited mother, and I shall not hunt them up now. Aunt Peggy is mother's only living sister. Grandfather Hatzfeld had a son—my uncle John, after whom I was named—but he never married, and died long ago."

"Hatzfeld? Was your mother's name Hatzfeld?"

"Yes."

Penrose relapsed into a fit of silence. "It would be strange," he said to himself; then, lifting his head, asked—

"Had your grandfather Hatzfeld brothers and sisters?"

"Oh, yes. Aunt Christina was his sister: she left mother our little place at the Cross-Keys when she died. Now, I recollect, I have heard mother speak of another aunt, Anna, who married and settled somewhere in New Jersey. I forget her name; it began with D. Grandfather had an older brother, too, but I think he went to Ohio. Mother never talked much about him: he didn't act fairly towards grandfather."

"D?" asked Penrose, with a curious interest. "Would you know the name if you were to hear it? Was it Denning?"

"Yes, that's it!" I exclaimed. "Why, how could you guess——"

"Because Anna Denning was *my* grandmother—my mother's mother! When you mentioned the name of Hatzfeld, it all came into my mind at once.

Why, Godfrey, your mother and mine were fi
cousins—*we* are cousins, therefore !”

He sat upright on the log and stretched out his
hand, which I took and held. “Penrose !” I ex-
claimed, “can it be possible ?”

“Plain as a pikestaff.”

“Oh, are you serious, Penrose ? I can hardly
believe it.”

I still held his hand, as if the newly-found rela-
tionship might slip away on releasing it. The old
mocking light came into his eyes.

“Do you want me to show the strawberry-mark on
my left arm ?” he asked ; “or a mole on my breast,
with three long black hairs growing out of it ?
Cousins are plenty, and you mayn’t thank me for
the discovery.”

“I am so glad !” I cried. “I have no cousin : it is
the next thing to a brother !”

His face softened again. “You’re a good fellow,
Godfrey,” said he, “or Cousin John, if you like that
better. Call me Alexander, if you choose. Since it
is so, I wish I had known it sooner.”

"If my poor mother could have known it!" I sighed.

"That's it!" he exclaimed—"the family likeness between your mother and mine. It puzzled me when I saw her. My mother has been dead three years, and there's a—I won't say what—in her place. As you're one of the family now, Godfrey, you may as well learn it from me as some one else, later. My father and mother didn't live happily together; but it was not *her* fault. While she lived, my sister and I had some comfort at home; she has it yet, for that matter, but I ——— There's no use in going over the story, except this much: it wasn't six months after my mother's death before my father married again. Married whom, do you think? His cook!—a vulgar, brazen wench, who sits down to the table in the silks and laces of the dead! And, worse than that, the marriage brought shame with it. If you can't guess what that means, now, you'll find out after a while; don't ask me to say anything more! I am as proud as my mother was, and do you think I could forgive

my father this, even if he had not always treated me like a brute?"

Penrose's eyes flashed through the indignant moisture which gathered in them. The warm olive of his skin had turned to a livid paleness, and his features were hard and cruel. I was almost afraid of him.

"He to demand of me that I should call *her* 'mother!' " he broke out again, his lip quivering, but not with tenderness—"it was forbearance enough that I did not give her the name she deserved! And my sister—but I suppose she is like most women, bent in any direction by anybody stronger than themselves. She stays at home—no, not at home, but *with them*—and writes me letters full of very good advice. Oh, yes, she's a miracle of wisdom! She's a young lady of twenty-one, and—and—the cook finds it very convenient to learn fashionable airs of her, and how to eat, and to enter a room, and hold her fan, and talk without yelling as if at the housemaid, and all the rest of their damnable folly! There! How do you like being related to such a pleasant family as that?"

I tried to stay the flood of bitterness, which revealed to me a fate even more desolate than my own. "Penrose," I said—"Cousin Alexander, you are so strong and brave, you can make your own way in the world, without their help. I'm less able than you, yet I must do it. I don't know why God allows some things to happen, unless it's to try us."

"None of that!" he cried, though less passionately; "I've worried my brain enough, thinking of it. I've come to the conclusion that most men are mean, contemptible creatures, and their good or bad opinion isn't worth a curse. If I take care of myself and don't sink down among the lowest, I shall be counted honest, and virtuous, and the Lord knows what; but I sometimes think that, if there are such things as honesty and virtue, we must look for them among the dregs of society. The top, I know, is nothing but a stinking scum."

I was both pained and shocked at the cynicism of these utterances, so harshly discordant with the youth and the glorious physical advantages of my cousin. Yes! the moment the new relation between us was

discovered and accepted, it established the bond which I felt to be both natural and welcome. It interpreted the previous sensation which he had excited in my nature. Some secret sympathy had bent, like the hazel wand in the hand of the diviner, to the hidden rill of blood. But the kinship of blood is not always that of the heart. "A friend is closer than a brother," say the Proverbs; I did not feel sure that he could be the friend I needed and craved, but cousinship was a familiar and affectionate tie, existing without our volition, justifying a certain amount of reciprocal interest, and binding neither to duties which time and the changes of life might render embarrassing. The confidence which Penrose had reposed in me came, therefore, in some degree, as the right of my relationship. I had paid for it, in advance, by my own.

Hence I was saved, on the one hand, from being drawn, during the warm, confiding outset of life, into a sneering philosophy, which I might never have outgrown, and on the other hand, from judging too harshly of Penrose's inherent character. It would do

no good at present, I saw, to protest against his expressions; so I merely said—

“You know more of the world than I do, Alexander: but I don’t like to hear you talk in that strain.”

“Perhaps you’re right, old fellow,” said he; “any way, I don’t include *you* among the rabble. I might have held my tongue about my grandmother, if I had chosen; but I guess you and I are not nearly enough related to fall out. There goes the bell; pick up your Eclogues, and come along!”

We went back to the school, arm in arm, talking familiarly. From that time forward the recognised, mysterious circle of Family inclosed us, and Penrose’s manner towards me was commensurate with the change. Never demonstrative, never even positively affectionate, he stood at least on level ground with me, and there was no wall between us. The other boys, of course, noticed the difference in our relations, and it was not long before the inquisitive Thornton said—

“I say, Pen, how is it that you’ve got to calling Godfrey ‘John,’ all at once?”

"Because he is my cousin."

Thornton's eyes opened very wide. "The devil he is!" he exclaimed. (Thornton was unnecessarily profane, because he thought it made him seem more important.) "When did you find that out?"

"It's none of your business," said Penrose, turning on his heel. Thornton thereupon went off and communicated the fact to the whole school in less than ten minutes.

After this, my cousin and I frequently walked out to the glen together. I was glad to see that the kinship, so inexpressibly welcome to myself, was also satisfactory to him. His first fragmentary confidence was completed by the details of his life, as he recalled them from time to time; but his bitter, disappointed, unbelieving mood always came to the surface, and I began to fear that it had already predetermined the character of his after-life.

One day, when he had been unusually gloomy in his utterances, he handed me a letter, saying, "Read that." It was from his sister, and ran, as nearly as I can recollect, as follows:—

“—— Street, Philadelphia.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Yours of the 10th is received. I am now so accustomed to your sarcastic style, that I always know what to expect when I open one of your epistles. I wish you joy of your—well, I must say *our* new cousin, though I am sorry you did not let me know of the discovery before telling *him*. He must be *gauche* and unpresentable in a degree; but then, I suppose, there's no likelihood of his ever getting into *our set*. It is time that your schooling was finished, so that I might have you for a while as my *chevalier*. Between ourselves, I'm rather tired of going about with” (here the word “mamma” had evidently been written and then blotted out) “Mrs. Penrose. Not but what she continues to improve—only, I am never certain of her not committing some *niaiserie*, which quite puts me out. However, she behaves well enough at home, and I hope you will overcome your prejudice in the end, for my sake. When you know as much about society as I do, you will see that it's always best to smooth over what's

irrevocable. People are beginning to forget the scandal, since that affair of Denbigh has given them something else to talk about. We were at Mrs. Delane's ball on Wednesday ; I made her put on blue cut velvet, and she did not look so bad. Mrs. Vane nodded, and of course *she* was triumphant. I think papa gives me the credit for all that has been done—I'm sure I deserve it. It's a race between Mrs. P. and myself which shall have the new India shawl at Stokes's; but I shall get it, because Mrs. P. knows that I could teach her to blunder awfully as well as to behave correctly, and *would* do it, in spite of papa's swearing, if she drives me to desperation. By the by, he has just come into the room, and says, 'You are writing to the cub, as usual, I suppose, Matilda.' So there you have him, to the life."

There was much more, in the same style. I must have coloured, with offended pride, on reading the opening lines, for on looking up, involuntarily, I saw my cousin smile, but so frankly and pleasantly that it instantly healed the wound his sister had made. I

confess the letter disgusted me; but it was written by my own cousin also, and I did not dare to express to her brother what I felt. I handed the letter back to him in silence.

"Come now, John," said he, "out with the truth! Would you not as lief be out of our family again?"

"Not while you are in it, Alexander," I replied.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH UNCLE AND AUNT WOOLLEY TAKE
CHARGE OF ME.

As the close of my last term at the Honeybrook Academy approached, I felt none of the eagerness for change, of the delight in coming release from study, which would have been natural to a boy of my age. On the contrary, I grew more and more reluctant to leave a spot which was now so familiar, and to give up the advantages of instruction at a time when I began to understand their importance. Both Miss Hitchcock and Dr. Dymond were sorry to lose me; the former because there was no other Latin pupil far enough advanced to read her expurgated Horace, and the latter because my original dialogues

and speeches were beginning to constitute a feature in the semi-annual exhibitions. If, among the boys, I had contracted no strong, permanent friendship, I had at least encountered no more than transient enmities; besides, I was getting to be one of the older and more conspicuous scholars, and thus enjoyed a certain amount of authority.

It was the hardest of all to part with Penrose. I could talk with him of my mother; could ask his counsel, as a relative, in regard to my proposed plans of life. The latter were still indefinite, it is true, but they pointed towards teaching as a preliminary employment. Behind that a crowded host of ambitious dreams, upon which I secretly fed my mind. Penrose, however, was to leave the school in the spring, and I should therefore have lost him six months later, in any case.

On the last Sabbath before my departure I walked over to the Cross-Keys, and spent the day with the Niles family. The shutters of the little cottage were still closed; I was glad of it. If strange faces had gazed from the windows I should have passed with

averted head; but I could now stop and look over the paling, and peer under the boughs of the plum-tree for a glimpse of the garden in the rear. Weeds were growing apace, and in the narrow strip of the "front yard" I missed a dainty little rose-bush—mother's pet—which used to be covered with diminutive double crimson blossom. Neighbour Niles always called it the "fi'penny-bit rose." I afterwards found it in the churchyard, so carefully transplanted that it was already blooming on mother's grave. It was not necessary to ask whose pious hand had placed it there.

The good neighbour and "Dave" gave me an honest and hearty welcome. She insisted on opening the best room, though I would have preferred the kitchen, where I could hear her cheery voice alternately from the vicinity of cookstove, cupboard, and table. For dinner we had the plain, yet most bountiful fare of the country, and she heaped my plate far beyond my powers of eating, saying, with every added spoonful, "I expect you're half starved at the school."

"Dr. Dymond doesn't look as if *he* ett much, anyhow," Dave remarked, with a chuckle.

"It seems quite nateral to have you here ag'in, Johnny," said the neighbour. "Dear me! to think how things has changed in the last two year. Poor Neighbour Godfrey! as good a woman as ever lived, though I say it to your face—dead and gone, and you movin' away to Readin', like as not never to come back ag'in. Well, you mustn't forgit your old neighbours, them that's always wished you well. Out of sight out of mind, they say; but I guess it don't hold true with everybody; leastways, not with me. I can't git over thinkin' about Becky Jane yit: it comes on to me powerful hard sometimes. She'd ha' been sixteen last August, if she'd ha' lived. I often go up and scrub off her tombstone, and scrape the rust out o' the letters."

"Oh, Neighbour Niles!" I cried, "you asked me once to write a few lines to put on the stone. I'll do it yet before I leave."

The good woman's face glowed with gratitude. "I'll see that it's put on, whatever you write," she

said, "if it takes the vally of every turkey I've raised."

I kept my promise. Four lines, containing a simile about a broken flower being laid beneath this sod, to bloom above in the garden of God, were sent to Neighbour Niles, and whoever takes the trouble to visit Cross-Keys churchyard will find them on Becky Jane's tombstone to this day.

It was some twenty miles to Reading, and accordingly on the day after the closing exhibition at the academy, a horse and light vehicle, despatched by my uncle, arrived to convey me to my new home. Nearly all the scholars were leaving for the autumn vacation, and my departure lost its solemnity in the hurry and confusion that prevailed. Penrose promised to correspond with me, and Charley Rand said, "Don't be astonished if you find me in Reading next summer." Mother Dymond gave me something wrapped up in a newspaper, saying, "Take it, now; you'll want them before you get there." "Them" proved to be six large and very hard ginger-cakes. My trunk—an old one which had

once belonged to my father—was tilted up on end in front of the seat, occasioning much misery both to my legs and the driver's; and so I left Honeybrook, the magnificent tin cupola sparkling a final farewell as we dashed up the "Reading pike."

The inevitable step having been taken—the fibres I had put out during the second stage of my boyhood torn loose—I began to speculate, with some curiosity, on the coming phase of my life. I found this attraction at least: I should live in a much larger and more important town than I had ever visited—a town with a river, a canal, and a new railroad. At the Cross-Keys, people always spoke of Reading as being inferior only to Philadelphia, and one of the Honeybrook boys, Detweiler, hotly and constantly proclaimed its glories, to the discomfiture of Marsh, who was from Lancaster. As the afternoon wore away, and the long miles slowly diminished down the teens, and then more slowly down the units, and the unsocial driver fell asleep every ten minutes, of which fact the horse took base advantage, I grew weary and impatient. My uncle's

house became a less unwelcome terminus to the journey.

At last we approached some bold hills—wonderful, astonishing mountains, I thought them. Our road stretched forward through a hollow between; a scattering village came into view, and a toll-gate barred the road. The driver awoke with a start. "Here's Gibraltar!" he said; "we'll soon be there now."

"Are those the Alleghany Mountains?" I asked.

"Guess you're green in these parts," said he. "Them ain't mountains."

"Well, what are their names?" I asked again, in much humiliation.

"This'n ha'n't no proper name: 'Penn's Mount,' some call it. T'other, on the left, is Neversink. You'll see Readin' in two minutes."

We presently emerged upon a slope, whence a glorious landscape opened upon my eyes. Never had I seen or imagined anything so beautiful. The stately old town lay below, stretched at full length on an inclined plane, rising from the Schuylkill to the base

of the mountain ; the river, winding in abrupt curves disclosed itself here and there through the landscape ; hills of superb undulation rose and fell, in inter-linking lines, through the middle distance, Scull's Hill boldly detaching itself in front, and far in the north the Blue Ridge lifted its dim wall against the sky. The sinking sun turned the smokes of the town and the vapours of the river to golden dust, athwart which faintly gleamed the autumn colouring of distant woods. The noises of the scene were softened and mellowed, and above them all, clear, sweet, and faint sounded the bugle of a boatman on the canal. It was not ignorant admiration on my part ; for one familiar with the grandest aspects of nature must still confess that few towns on this side of the Atlantic are so nobly environed.

As we entered the place I could scarcely turn my head rapidly enough to the right and left, in my inspection of signs, houses, and people. The brick sidewalks seemed to be thronged, but nobody paid any particular attention to us. In Honeybrook every one would have stopped and looked at us so long as

we were in sight. The driver turned into the broad main avenue of Penn Street, with its central line of markets, then downward towards the river, and drew up, a few blocks further, at a corner. It was a low, old-fashioned brick house, with a signboard over the front door and window, upon which was inscribed, in faded letters: "A. WOOLLEY'S GROCERY STORE." There were boxes of candles, some bottles, a rope of onions, half-a-dozen withered lemons, and a few other articles in the window; a woman was issuing from the door with a basket full of brown paper parcels on her arm. On the other side of the portly window a narrow door was squeezed into the wall. The driver, having alighted, jerked my trunk out of the waggon, brought it down with a crash on the upper step, and rang the bell. The door was opened by Aunt Peggy, in person: she had been one of the shadows which had haunted my mother's funeral, and I therefore recognised her.

My trunk was brought in and stood on end in the narrow passage, which it almost blocked up. "You won't want it before bedtime, I reckon," said my

aunt; "so leave it there, and Bolty will help you carry it up. Come into the settin'-room."

Following her, I found myself presently in a small room behind the store. It was comfortably furnished, but somewhat chill and unfriendly in its atmosphere—stiff, almost, although nothing could have been less so than my aunt's appearance. She wore a limp calico dress, of some dark pattern, and a cap, the strings of which were untied and hung over her breast. Her face was long and thin, and her hair, many shades lighter than my mother's, fell in straight, lank lines over her ears. There was usually a tuft of it sticking out somewhere about the back of her neck. Her eyes were small and grey, her nose long and pointed, and her lips thin and sunken at the corners, from the loss of most of her back teeth. Add to this a weak, lamenting voice—rather, indeed, a whine—and it will readily be conceived that my Aunt Peggy was not a person to inspire a young man with enthusiasm for the female sex. Never were two sisters more unlike than she and mother. I presume there must have been a

family likeness somewhere, but I was really unable to discover it.

In a few minutes Uncle Amos came in from the store. He shook hands with me with more cordiality than I had anticipated. "We'll have things fixed, in the course of a day or two," he said. "Now, Peggy, I guess you had better get tea ready: John will be hungry, after his ride. Will you come into the store, John, and look around a little?"

I preferred that to sitting alone in the back room. After stumbling over some coffee bags—for it was getting dusky, and the lamps were not yet lighted—I came forth into the open space behind the counter, where a boy of my own age was very busily engaged in weighing and "doing up" various materials. Uncle Amos stepped forward to assist him, leaving me to play the spectator. For a little while, both were actively employed; then, the rush of custom having suddenly subsided, my uncle said, "Here, Bolty, this is my nephew, John Godfrey. John, this is my assistant, Bolty Himpel."

Bolty grinned and nodded, but said nothing. He

was larger in every way than myself, but looked younger. His hair, so blonde as to be almost white, was cut close to his head; his forehead was low, his eyes large, wide apart, and pale blue; his nose short, thick, and flattened in the middle, and his mouth large and partly open. He was of the pure peasant blood of Southern Germany, his name, Bolty, being simply a contraction of Leopold, with a little confusion of kindred consonants. I was a good deal surprised at my uncle's choice of an assistant, but I afterwards found that Bolty understood the business and nothing else. His round, unmeaning face was a perpetual advertisement of simple honesty to the customers. He knew it, and profited thereby. Besides, he spoke fluently that remarkable language the Pennsylvania German—a useful accomplishment in a town where many native families were almost wholly ignorant of English.

In a quarter of an hour, my aunt whined out of the gloom at the back of the store, "Tea, Amos!" and we obeyed the melancholy summons. The table was set in the kitchen behind the sitting-room, and

so near the stove that Aunt Peggy could reach the hot water with her right hand, without rising from her chair. The board looked very scantily supplied, to my eyes, accustomed to country profuseness, but there proved to be enough.

After we were seated, Uncle Amos bent, or rather plunged forward, over his plate, waving his hands with the palms outward, before bringing them together in the attitude of prayer. There was a certain ostentation in this gesture, which struck me at once. It seemed to say, "Take notice, Lord: I am about to ask Thy blessing." This was a very irreverent fancy of mine, I confess; but there it was: I couldn't help it.

Most people—as we find them—would have considered Uncle Amos a man of imposing presence. He was both tall and stout, and the squareness in his outlines, both of head and body, suggested a rough, massive strength. His head was bald from the forehead to the crown, but the side hair was combed upwards so as to overlap and partially conceal it. His eyes were hard and shot forth a steely twinkle

from under their fat lids; the corners were channelled with a multitude of short, sly wrinkles. The skin of his cheeks was unpleasantly threaded here and there by fine, dark purple veins, and always had a gloss like varnish when he was freshly shaven. I half suspect, now, that part of my instinctive dislike to him arose from the jar which his appearance occasioned to my sense of beauty. As a matter of conscience, I tried to like him; but I am afraid the exertion was not very severe.

After tea, I went back to the sitting-room, while my uncle took Bolty's place and allowed the latter to get his meal in turn. Then it was necessary to wait until the store should be closed for the night, and, to divert the time, Aunt Peggy brought me the "Life of Henry Martyn," which I read with hearty interest. "A good model," said my uncle, looking over my shoulder, as he came in, after the shutters had been duly fastened and bolted.

"Shut it up now," he continued. "We go early to bed, and get up early, in this house. Bolty, come here, and help John upstairs with his trunk."

Bolty seized one end of the unwieldy box, and we slowly bumped and stumbled up two flights of stairs, into a large room under the roof, with a single window in the gable. I remarked, with a disagreeable sensation, that there was only one bed, and that one not remarkably broad. The big, coarse fellow would be sure to usurp the most of it, and his broad nose and open mouth indicated an immense capacity for snoring. Besides, I was always, from a very child, exceedingly sensitive to what I may call, for want of a better term, human electricity; that is to say, certain persons attract me, or impart a sense of comfort, by their physical nearness, while others repel or convey an impression of vague discomfort. This feeling seems to have no connection with beauty or ugliness, health or disease, or even affection or enmity. It arises from some subtle affinity of physical temperament, like that which we occasionally notice in the vegetable world. There are certain plants which flourish or droop in the neighbourhood of certain others. I think this delicate, intangible sense is general among cultivated persons, but I have never

found it developed to the same extent as in my own case.

I could not justly class Bolty Himpel among those strongly repellant natures whose approach to me was like that of a poisonous wind, but there was sufficient of the feeling to make the necessity of lying all night in his "atmosphere" very distasteful. However, there was no help for it; he had already asked me —

"Which side will you take?"

I chose that nearest the window, and soon fell asleep, wearied with the changing excitements of the day. It was not long, apparently, before the bedstead creaked and shook, and a loud voice yelled, "Tumble out!"

The dawn was glimmering through the window. Bolty was already hauling on his trousers, and I rose and looked out. To my delight I could see the long, majestic outline of Penn's Mount above the houses, its topmost trees making a dark fringe against the morning sky. The view became a part of my garret furniture, and changed the aspect of the room at once.

"Boss is pretty sharp," said Bolty to me, as I com-

menced dressing; "he opens half an hour sooner and keeps open half an hour later than any other grocery in the town. 'Tain't a bad plan. People get to know it, and they come to us when they can't go nowhere else. It keeps us on the go, though. You ha'n't done nothin' at business, ha'n't you?"

"No," I answered; "I've been at school. 'Twas Uncle Amos's plan that I should come here, and I don't know how I'll like it."

"Oh, you'll soon git the hang of it. I don't s'pose he'll put you to rollin' o' bar'ls and openin' o' boxes. Y'ain't built for that."

Whereupon Bolty deliberately squeezed and twisted the muscles of my upper arm in such wise that they were sore for the rest of the day. "That's the crow-bar," said he, bending and stiffening his own right arm, until the flexor rose like an arch; "and them's the death mauls," shaking his clenched fists. These expressions he had evidently picked up from some canal boatman. Their force and fierceness contrasted comically with the vacant good-humour written on his face.

We went down to the shop and opened the shutters. There was little custom before breakfast, so I lounged about behind the counter, pulling open drawers of spices and reading the labels on bottles and jars. After all, I thought, there are more disagreeable avocations in the world than that of a grocer—bricklaying, for instance. I determined to do my share of the work faithfully, whether I liked it or not. I was in my nineteenth year, and, at the worst, would be my own master at twenty-one.

Bolty was right in his conjecture. He had not only more strength than myself, but greater mechanical dexterity, and consequently the heavy work fell to his share. My uncle, finding that I wrote a neat hand and was a good arithmetician, gradually initiated me into the mysteries of day-book and ledger. I also assisted in waiting upon the customers, and in a few days became sufficiently expert at sliding sugar or coffee out of the scoop, so as to turn the scale by the weight of a grain or single bean, settling the contents in paper bags, and tying them

squarely and compactly. My uncle was too shrewd a business man to let me learn at the expense of customers: I was required to cover the counter with packages of various weights, the contents of which were afterwards returned to the appropriate bins or barrels. Thus, while I was working off my awkwardness, the grocery presented an air of unusual patronage to its innocent visitors.

Many of our customers were farmers of the vicinity, who brought their eggs, butter, and cheese, to exchange for groceries. This was a profitable part of the business, as we gained in both buying and selling. There was a great demand among these people for patent medicines, which formed a very important branch of my uncle's stock, and he could have found no better salesman than Bolty Himpel. The latter discovered, in an incredibly short time, from what neighbourhood a new customer came, and immediately gave an account of the relief which somebody, living in an opposite direction, had derived from the use of certain pills or plasters.

"Weakness o' the back, eh?" he would say to some

melancholy-faced countrywoman ; "our Balm of Gilead's the stuff for that. Only three levies a bottle ; rub it in with flannel, night and mornin'. Mr. Empson—you know him, p'r'aps, down on Poplar Neck ? — was bent double with the rheumatiz, and two bottles made him as straight as I am. Better take some o' the Peruvian Preventative, while you're about it, ma'am — keeps off chills and fevers. Deacon Dingey sent all the way down from Port Clinton t'other day for some : they don't keep it there. Lives in a ma'shy place, right on the river, and they ha'n't had a chill in the family since they use 'em. I reckon we've sold wheelbarra loads."

I noticed in the course of time, that Uncle Amos never interfered with Bolty's loquacity, unless (which happened very rarely) his recommendation was overdone and the customer became suspicious. Sometimes, indeed, he said, with a gravity not wholly natural, "Rather too strong. Don't tell more than you know."

"Oh," Bolty would answer, "'twon't kill if it don't cure."

This youth had an astonishing memory of names and faces—a faculty in which, probably from want of practice, I was deficient. His German also made him indispensable to many of the country people. My uncle possessed a tolerable smattering of the language, and insisted that I should endeavour to learn it. “It’s more use than the heathenish Latin you learned in school,” said he.

“Why, Uncle Amos,” I retorted, “I read Sacred History in Latin.”

“Then it wasn’t the Word of God, which was inspired in Hebrew,” he answered.

I had determined to go on alone with my Latin studies, and his disapprobation of the language troubled me. I could not, as I proposed, bring the books down to the desk behind the counter, and devote the end of the evening to them, without incurring his pious censure. Against German he would have no such scruples, and I decided, though with regret, to take that language instead. I remembered that Grandfather Hatzfeld, who had been educated in Bethlehem, spoke it habitually, and that my mother

retained her knowledge of it to the last. Among her books was an old edition of Herder and Liebeskind's "Palmbblätter," which she had often read to me, as a child, and I had then understood. This early knowledge, however, had long since faded to a blank, but it left the desire to be renewed, and perhaps unconsciously smoothed the first difficulties of the study.

I saw little of Aunt Peggy, except at meals and on Sundays. Having never had any children of her own, she would scarcely have been able to assume a motherly attitude towards me; but I do not think she tried. Her share in the conversation was generally of a discouraging cast, and the subject which most seemed to excite her interest was a case of back-sliding which had recently occurred in my uncle's church. For several days the latter added to his tri-daily grace a prayer "that them which have forsaken the light may be brought back to it, and that them which wander in darkness may be led to seek it!" He was undoubtedly sincere in this prayer, and I could have joined in it, had I not been suspicious

enough to guess that the latter clause must be aimed at myself.

On Sundays, Bolty and I went twice to church with my uncle and aunt, dutifully joining in the hymns, as I had been accustomed to do with my mother. I declined taking a class in the Sunday-school, much to my uncle's displeasure; but, after being confined to the store all the week, I felt an urgent craving for a mouthful of fresh air and the freedom of the landscape. Sometimes I climbed high up the sides of Mount Penn, whence the brown tints of the coming winter vanished far off in delicious blue; but more frequently I walked northward to the knoll now covered by the Cemetery, and enjoyed the luxury of a wide lookout on all sides. In the evening, Bolty was allowed to visit his father, an honest, hard-working shoemaker, living on the eastern edge of the town, and I occasionally accompanied him. The family conversation was entirely in German, so that these visits were not much of a recreation, after all.

I soon saw that the literary performances which

had been my pride and delight at school must be given up, at least for the winter. There was no fire in the garret bedroom, and I was not likely to be left in possession of the sitting-room behind the store more than once a month.

CHAPTER VIII.

DESCRIBING CERTAIN INCIDENTS OF MY LIFE IN
READING.

THE winter, having fairly set in, dragged on its monotonous round. During the cold weather there was less to do in the store, and I had frequent hours of leisure, which I passed on my high stool at the desk, reading such books as I could procure, and a few which I bought. The sale of the cottage and furniture left a surplus of sixty-seven dollars, after paying the expenses of my mother's funeral and my last term at Dr. Dymond's. On making this statement, as my guardian, my uncle said—

“You don't need any more clothes this winter, and you'd better let me put this out for you. You'll

have no expenses here, as I count that what you do in the store will about balance your board."

I greatly longed to have the whole sum in my hands, but offered to let him "put out" fifty dollars and give me the remainder. He consented, though with an ill grace, saying, "It isn't good to give boys the means of temptation."

I had never before had one-tenth part as much money in my pocket, and it gave me a wonderfully comfortable feeling of wealth and independence. My first step was to buy an octavo volume, containing the poems of Milton, Young, Gray, Beattie, and Collins, every word of which I faithfully read. (I wonder whether anybody else ever did the same thing.) I also purchased a blank diary, with headings for every day in the year, and kept it in the breast-pocket of my coat, with fear and trembling lest it should be left lying where my uncle might find and read it. For a month or two the entries were very regular, then more and more fragmentary, and before summer they ceased altogether. The little volume, with its well-worn cover and embrowned

paper, is now before me. I turn its pages with a smile at its extravagant sentiment and immature reflections. Can it be that I really wrote such stuff as this?—

“*Jan. 28.*—Cold and cloudy—emblematic of my life. In the afternoon, gleams of sunshine, flashing like the *wings of angels*. Would I too could *soar* above these sublunary cares! Read ‘Childe Harold’ while uncle was out. Is it wrong to *steal* one’s intellectual food? No; the *famishing* soul must have nourishment!”

As I became familiar with the routine of my duties, and Uncle Amos found that the accounts could be safely intrusted to my care, he frequently left the store to Bolty and myself, and made short trips into the country for the purpose of procuring supplies and perfecting his system of exchange. In this way he snapped up many a pound of butter and dozen of eggs which would have found their way to other groceries; and during the season when those articles were rather scarce he was always well supplied—a fact which soon became known and brought a

notable increase of custom. He also went to Philadelphia, to make his purchases of the wholesale dealers in person, instead of ordering them by letter. We, of course, felt a greater responsibility during his absence, and were very closely confined to our duties. Bolty had no other ambition than to set up in business for himself, some day; it was an aim he never lost sight of, and I was sure he would reach it. For my part, having been forced into my present position, I longed for the coming of the day which would release me, but I was too conscientious either to break loose from it or to slight my share of the labour.

About the beginning of April, either from the close confinement within doors to which I had been subjected, or to some change in my system—for I was still growing, and had now attained the average height of men—I was attacked with fever. The malady was not severe nor dangerous, but stubborn; and though, after a week's confinement to the spare bedroom on the second story, I was able to sit up and move about again, the physician prescribed rest

for a fortnight longer, with moderate exercise when the weather was fine. Aunt Peggy waited upon me as well as she was able: that is, when her household duties had been performed, she brought her knitting and sat by the stove at the foot of my bed, asking occasionally, in a tearful voice, "How do you feel, John?" Fortunately, I required no watching at night, for there was no element of tenderness in the house to make it endurable. My uncle took my place in the store, though it must have been a serious interruption to his outside plans. He acquiesced, without apparent impatience, in the doctor's prescription of further rest.

During those days of convalescence I experienced a delicious relief and lightness of heart. Spring had burst suddenly upon the land with a balmy brightness and warmth which lingered, day after day, belying the fickle fame of the month. Walking down Penn Street and crossing the bridge, I would find a sunny seat on the top of the grey cliff beyond, and bask in the soft awakening of the landscape around. The bluebird sang like the voice of the season;

below me, in gardens and fields, I saw how the dark brown of the mellow earth increased for the planting, and how sheets or cloudy wafts of green settled over the barrenness of winter. Again I became hopeful, joyous, confident of the future. Time and the tenderness of memory had softened my grief. I often recalled mother's words on her death-bed, and allowed no unavailing sting of remorse for neglected duties to cloud the serenity of my resignation. It was thus, I felt, that she would have me to feel, and her sainted spirit must rejoice in the returning buoyancy of mine.

On one of those lovely April afternoons, as I was musing on the cliff—my thoughts taking a vague, wandering rhythm from the sound of a boatman's horn down the river—the idea of writing something for publication came into my mind. A poem, of course—for "Childe Harold," "Manfred," and "The Corsair" had turned the whole drift of my ideas into a channel of imagined song. To write some verses and have them printed would be joy—triumph—glory. The idea took possession of me with irresistible

force. Two dollars out of my seventeen had gone for a subscription to the *Saturday Evening Post*—an expense at which Uncle Amos had grumbled, until he found that Aunt Peggy took stealthy delight in perusing the paper. In its columns I found charming poetry by Bessie Bulfinch and Adeliza Choate, besides republications from contemporary English literature, especially Dickens. B. Simmons, T. K. Hervey, and Charles Swain became, for me, demigods of song: I could only conceive of them as superior beings, of lofty stature and majestic beauty. I had never seen a man who had written a book. Even the editors of the *Gazette* and *Adler*, in Reading, were personages whose acquaintance I did not dare to seek. There was always a half-column in the *Post*, addressed "To Correspondents," containing such messages as: "Ivanhoe's story contains some sweet passages, but lacks incident: declined with thanks;" or, "The 'Fairy's Bower,' by 'Cecilia,' is a poem of much promise, and will appear next week." I invariably read the articles thus accepted, and, while I recognized their great merit (for were they

not printed ?) it seemed to me that, by much exertion, I might one day achieve the right to appear in their ranks.

After having given hospitality to the idea, I carried pencil and paper with me, and devoted several afternoons to the poem. It was entitled, "The Unknown Bard" (meaning myself, of course), written in heroic lines, after I had vainly attempted the Spenserian stanza. As nearly as I can recollect, there were fifty or sixty lines of it, describing my intellectual isolation, and how I must stifle the burning thoughts that filled my bosom, lest the cold world should crush me with its envenomed scorn ! I signed myself "Selim," a name which I found in Collins's First Eclogue, and particularly admired. How I used to wish that some good genius had inspired my mother to give me the name of "Selim," or "Secander," instead of "John !" However, as "Selim" I would be known in the world of letters and on the tablets of fame—Selim, the Unknown Bard !

Finished, at last, and copied in my distinctest hand, there came the question—how should I send

it? The clerk at the post-office knew me, because I went there for my uncle's letters, and also, weekly, for my beloved newspaper. Perhaps he also read the paper, and would be sure to find a connection between my letter and the editorial answer to Selim, of Reading. Not for the world would I have entrusted the awful secret to a single soul—not even to Penrose or Bob Simmons. Perhaps I should still have run the risk, as I fancied it to be, of using the post, but for a most lucky and unexpected chance. Uncle Amos suggested that I should go to Philadelphia, in his stead, on some business relating to sugar, with the details of which I was well acquainted. I was almost too demonstrative in my delight; for my suspicious uncle shook his head, and made it a condition that I should go down in the morning train, accomplish my mission at once, and return the same evening.

On reaching the right-angled city, I found my way with little difficulty to "Simpson and Brother," Market Street, near Second, and, after faithfully transacting the business, had still two hours to spare before

the departure of the return train. The newspaper office was near at hand—Chestnut, above Third—and thither I repaired, with flushed face and beating heart, the precious epistle held fast in my hand, yet carefully concealed under my sleeve, lest any one, in passing by, should read the superscription and guess the contents. I do not smile at myself, as I recall this experience. The brain, like the heart, has its virginity, and its first earnest utterance is often as tremulously shy as the first confession of love.

My intention had been to deliver the letter at the office of the paper, as if I had been simply its bearer and not its author. But after I had mounted two dark, steep flights of steps, and found myself before the door, my courage failed me. I heard voices within: there were several persons, then. They would be certain to look at me sharply; to notice my agitation; perhaps to question me about the letter. While I was standing thus, twisting and turning it in my hand, in a veritable perspiration from excitement, I heard footsteps descending from an upper

story. Desperate and panic-stricken, I laid the letter hastily on the floor, at the door of the office, and rushed down to the street as rapidly and silently as possible. Without looking around, I walked up Chestnut Street with a fearful impression that somebody was following me, and turning the corner of Fourth, began to read the titles of the books in Hart's window. Five minutes having elapsed, I knew that I was not discovered, and recovered my composure; though, now that the poem had gone out of my hands, I would have given anything to get it back again.

When the next number of the paper arrived, I tore off the wrapper with trembling fingers, and turned to the fateful column on the second page. But I might as well have postponed my excitement: there was no notice of the poem. Perhaps they never received the letter; perhaps it had been trodden upon and defaced, and swept down-stairs by the office-boy! These were, at least, consoling possibilities—better than to be contemptuously ignored. By the following week my fever was nearly over, and I opened the paper

with but a faint expectation of finding anything; but lo! there it was—"Selim" at the very head of the announcements! These were the precious words: "We are obliged to 'Selim' for his poem, which we shall publish shortly. It shows the hand of youth, but evinces a flattering promise. Let him trim the midnight lamp with diligence."

If the sinking sun had wheeled about and gone up the western sky, or the budding trees had snapped into full leaf in five minutes, I don't believe it would have astonished me. I was on my way home from the post-office when I read the lines, and I remember turning out of Penn Street to go by a more secluded and circuitous way, lest I should be tempted to cut a pigeon-wing on the pavement, in the sight of the multitude. I passed a little brick building, with a tin sign on the shutter: "D. J. Mulford, Attorney-at-law." "Pooh!" I said to myself; "what's D. J. Mulford? *He* never published a poem in his life!" As I caught a glimpse of his head, silhouetted against the back window, I found myself, nevertheless, rather inclined to pity him for being unconscious that the

author of "The Unknown Bard" was at that moment passing his door.

This disproportionate exultation, the reader will say, betrayed shallow waters. Why should I not admit the fact?

My mind *was* exceedingly shallow at that time, but, thank heaven! it was limpid as a mountain brook. It could have floated no craft heavier than a child's toy-sloop, but the sun struck through it and filled its bed with light. If it is expected that we should feel ashamed of our intellectual follies, we must needs regret that we were ever young.

When the poem at last appeared, after a miserably weary interval of two or three weeks, I was a little mortified to find that some liberty had been taken with the language. Where I had written "hath" I found "has" substituted; and, what was worse, "Fame's *eternal* brow," which I thought so grand, was changed into "Fame's resplendent brow." The poem didn't seem quite mine, with these alterations: they took off the keen edge of my pride and my happiness. However, Selim was at last the companion, if

not the equal, of Bessie Bulfinch and Adeliza Choate—that was a great point gained. I determined that he should not relapse into silence.

My next essay was a tale, called "Envy; or, the Maiden of Ravenna." I am ashamed to say that I placed the city upon the summit of a frightful precipice, the base of which was washed by the river Arno! Laurelia, the maiden of the story, fell from the awful steep, but fortunately alighted on the branch of a weeping willow, which gently transferred her to the water, whence she was rescued by the Knight Grimaldi. But this story proved too much even for the kindly editor, whose refusal was so gentle and courteous that it neither wounded my pride nor checked my ambition.

One day in early summer I happened to pass again by the office of D. J. Mulford. I glanced at the sign mechanically, and was going on, when a terrible thumping on the window-panes startled and arrested me. I stopped: the window was suddenly raised, and who but Charley Rand poked his head out!

"I say, Godfrey!" he cried; "come in here a

minute! Mulford's out, and I have the office to myself."

"Why, Rand," said I, as he opened the door for me, "how did you get here?"

"Sit down, and I'll tell you all about it. Father said, you know, that I might be a lawyer, if I had a mind. Well, this spring, when he found I had Latin enough to tell him what *posse comitatus* meant, and *scire facias*, and *venditioni exponas*, and so on—such as you see in the sheriffs' advertisements—he thought I was ready to begin the study. I had no objection, for I knew that the school would be dull, with Penrose, Marsh, Brotherton, and most of the older boys gone, and, besides, it's time I was seeing a little more life. Many fellows set up in business for themselves at my age. Mulford is father's lawyer, whenever he's obliged to have one. I suppose he'll be *my* first client, after I pass. I've been here ten days, and was just thinking I must find you out, when I saw you go by the window. Have a cigar?"

I declined the offer, and politely, considering my abhorrence of the custom.

"You've grown, Godfrey," Rand continued, hauling a second chair towards him and hoisting his feet upon the arms; "and I see you're getting some fuzz on your chin. You'll be a man soon, and I shouldn't wonder if you make your mark some day."

I overlooked the patronizing manner of this remark in its agreeable substance. And here I should explain that Charley Rand was now by no means the same youth as on the day when we were together intrusted to Dr. Dymond's care. Until then he had been petted and humoured in every possible way, and was selfish and overbearing in his manner. A few months among forty or fifty boys, however, taught him to moderate his claims. He was brought down to the common level, and with that flexibility of nature which was his peculiar talent, or faculty, leaped over to the opposite extreme of smooth-tongued subservience. What he had ceased to gain by impudence, he now endeavoured to obtain by coaxing, flattering and wheedling. In the latter art he soon became an adept. Many a time have I worked out for him some knotty problem, in viola-

tion of the rules of the school, and in violation, also, of my own sense of right, cajoled by his soft, admiring, affectionate accents. I do not describe his character as I understood it then, but as I afterwards learned it. I was his dupe.

In the space of half an hour he managed to extract from me the particulars of my life and occupation in Reading. He already knew, in ten days, much more about the principal families of the place than I had learned in eight months. After this interview, I soon got the habit of walking round to Mulford's office on Sunday afternoons, and spending an hour or two with him. We sat in the back-room, which opened on a little yard covered with weeds, boards, and broken bottles, so that the proprieties of the street-side of the building were carefully respected. I felt less lonely, now that there was a schoolmate within hail.

In my uncle's house things went on very much as usual. Bolty and I had scarcely any taste in common (unless it was a fondness for pea-nuts, which I retain to this day), but we never quarrelled. As we

were strictly attentive to our respective duties, my uncle seemed to be satisfied with us, and was, for this reason perhaps, forbearing in other respects. Aunt Peggy adhered to her monotonous household round, and made no attempt to control my actions, except when I bought white linen instead of nankeen, for summer wear. "There'll be no end to the washin' of it," she said, in a voice so suggestive of tears that I expected to see her take out her handkerchief.

It was plain to me that Uncle Amos intended to enlarge his business as rapidly as was consistent with his prudent and cautious habits. I had good reason to believe that my services were included in his plans; yet, though I was more firmly fixed than ever in my determination to leave when his legal guardianship should cease, I judged it best to be silent on this point. It would only lead to tedious sermons—discussions in which neither could have the least sympathy with the other's views, and possibly a permanent and very disagreeable disturbance in our relations towards each other. I do not think he

recognized, as I did, that I had quietly established an armistice, which I could at any time annul.

In one sense, Bolty was my aid. He never mentioned the subject, but I understood then as well as I do now that he knew my want of liking for the business, and was satisfied that it should be so. After the weather grew warm enough, I resumed my Latin studies in the garret; thither also I took prohibited books, and filled quires of paper with extracts and comments, feeling, instinctively, that my companion would never betray me.

This sort of life was not what I would have chosen. It was far from satisfying the cravings of heart and brain; but I bore it with patience, looking forward to the day of release.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH I OUGHT TO BE A SHEEP, BUT PROVE
TO BE A GOAT.

THERE was one point upon which I was always apprehensive that Uncle Amos would assail me. It dated from the first evening in the little cottage at the Cross-Keys, the previous summer. What I have said of my shrinking delicacy of feeling with regard to my poetic attempts will equally apply to the religious sentiment. A dear and tender friend might have found me willing to open my heart to him concerning sacred things; but I could not, dared not, admit a less privileged person to the sanctuary. I had not the courage nor the independence necessary to arrest my uncle's approach to the subject, and

was therefore preternaturally watchful and alert in retreating. Very often, I suspect, I fancied an ambush where none existed. My uncle probably saw that he must tread cautiously, and feel his way by degrees, for I only remember one conversation in the course of the summer which really disturbed me.

My poor mother had been an earnest Lutheran, of the hearty, cheerful, warm-blooded German sort. She always preferred thanksgiving for God's mercies to fear of His wrath, and had brought me up in the faith that the beauties and blessings of this life might be enjoyed without forfeiting one's title as a Christian. At the age of fourteen I had been confirmed, and was therefore to be considered as a member of the Church. At least, I supposed that the principal religious duty thenceforth required of me was to follow God's commandments as nearly as my imperfect human nature would allow. I never closed my eyes in sleep without invoking the protection of my only Father, with a grateful feeling in my heart of hearts that He did indeed hear and

heed me. I did not fear damnation, because I had not the slightest liking for the devil.

I knew little or nothing of the slight partitions which divide the multitudinous sects of the Christian world, and was not the least troubled in conscience at attending my uncle's church instead of my own. Whatever was doctrinal in the latter I had forgotten since my confirmation, probably because it had then made very little impression on my mind. My uncle's clergyman was a mild, amiable man, whose goodness it was impossible to doubt, and I listened to his sermons with proper reverence.

Something, I know not what—possibly some memory of my mother—led me, one Sunday in summer, to attend the Lutheran church. The well-known hymns fell on my ear with a home-like sound, and the powerful tones of the organ seemed to lift me to new devotional heights. In the sermon I felt the influence of a strong, massive intellect, the movements of which I could not always follow, but which stimulated and strengthened me. After this, I divided my Sundays nearly equally between the

two churches. On informing my uncle and aunt, at dinner, where I had been, the former was at first silent; but, after some grave reflection, asked me—

“Are you a member of that persuasion?”

“Oh, yes,” I answered; “just the same as mother and Aunt Peggy.”

I struck a blow without intending it. Aunt Peggy looked startled and uneasy; a strong colour came into her face; then, after a quick glance at uncle, she lifted her hands and exclaimed, “No! Praise and glory, not now.”

“Hem!” coughed Uncle Amos. “Never mind, Peggy; blessed are them that see!” Then, turning to me, he added, “Do you mean that you have professed faith and been baptized?”

“I was baptized when I was a baby,” I answered, “and confirmed when I was fourteen.”

“Have you experienced a change of heart?”

“No,” I boldly said, thinking that he meant to indicate infidelity, or some other kind of backsliding, by this term.

Uncle Amos, to my surprise, uttered a loud groan,

and Aunt Peggy made that peculiar clucking noise with her tongue against her teeth, which some women employ to signify disaster or lamentation.

"You feel, then," said Uncle Amos, after a long pause, "that your nature is utterly corrupt and sinful? Do you not see what a mockery it is to claim that you are a follower of the Lamb?"

"No, uncle!" I cried, indignantly; "I am *not* corrupt and sinful. I don't pretend to be a saint, but no one has a right to call me a sinner. I have kept all the commandments, except the tenth, and I never broke that without repenting of it afterwards. Mother belonged to the Lutheran Church, and I won't hear anything said against it."

For a moment an equally earnest reply seemed to be hovering on my uncle's tongue; but he checked himself with a strong effort, groaned in a subdued way, and remarked with unusual gravity, "Darkness! darkness!" His manner towards me, for a day or two afterwards, was unusually solemn. The exigencies of business, however, soon restored our ordinary relations.

In the autumn, my uncle's church was visited by a noted "revival" preacher, whose coming had been announced some time in advance. He was a Kentuckian of considerable fame in his own sect, and even beyond its borders, so that his appearance never failed to draw crowds together. As this was his first visit to Reading, it was an event which could not, of course, be allowed to go by without giving the church the full benefit of the impression he should produce, and a large increase of the congregation was counted upon as a sure result.

Finally, Mr. Brandreth, the resident clergyman, announced with unusual unction that "on the next Sabbath, Brother Mellowby would occupy the pulpit." The news immediately spread through the town, and was duly announced in the papers. When the day and hour arrived, the church was so crowded that extra benches were brought and placed lengthwise along the aisles. Expectation was on tiptoe, when, after the hymn had been sung and Mr. Brandreth had made a prayer in which the distinguished brother was not forgotten, a tall form arose and stood in the

pulpit. Brother Mellowby was over six feet in height, and rather lank, but with broad, square shoulders and massive face. His eyes were large and dark, and his black hair, growing straight upward from his forehead, turned and fell on either side in long locks, which tossed and waved in the wind of his eloquence. His cheek-bones were prominent, his mouth large and expressive (that Michael Angelo's "Moses" still reminds me of it), and his chin square and strong. Altogether, evidently a man of power and of purpose, but with more iron than gold in his composition. He looked, to me, as if he had at one time been near enough to hell to feel the scorch of its flames, and had thence fought his way to heaven by sheer force of a will stronger than the devil's.

The commencement of his sermon was grave, earnest, and deliberate. It held the attention of the congregation rather by the clear, full, varied music of his voice than by any peculiar force of expression. Towards the close, however, as he touched upon the glories of the Christian's future reward, the wonderful

power of his voice and the warmth of his personal magnetism developed themselves. Looking upwards, with rapt ecstatic gaze, he seemed verily to behold what he described: the clouds opening, the glory breaking through, the waving of golden palms in the hands of the congregated angels, the towers of the New Jerusalem, shining far off, in depths of infinite lustre, the green Eden of Heaven, watered by the River of Life; and then, glory surpassing all these glories, the unimaginable radiance of the Throne. Still pointing upwards, as he approached the awful light, he suddenly stopped, covered his eyes, and, in a voice of tremulous awe, exclaimed, "The seraphs veil their brows before Him; the eyes of the redeemed souls dare not look upon His countenance; the mind clothed in corrupting flesh cannot imagine his glory!"

The speaker sat down. I had scarcely breathed during this remarkable peroration, and when his voice ceased, seemed to drop through leagues of illuminated air, to find myself, with a shock, in my uncle's pew. For a few seconds the silence endured;

then a singular, convulsive sound, which was not a cry, yet could scarcely be called a groan, ran through the church. Some voices exclaimed "Glory!" the women raised their handkerchiefs to their faces, and an unaccustomed light shone from the eyes of the men. The hymn commencing, "Turn to the Lord and seek salvation," then arose from the congregation with a fervour which made it seem the very trumpet-call and battle-charge of the armies of the Cross.

I did not go to church in the evening, but I heard that the impression produced by Mr. Mellowby's first sermon was still further increased by his second. Several "hopeful" cases were already reported, and the services were announced to continue through the week. My uncle proposed that Bolty and I should relieve each other alternately, in the evenings, so that we might both attend. I was prevented, however, from going again until Wednesday, by which time he had decided to put up the shutters an hour earlier, even at the loss of some little custom.

On this occasion Bolty and I went together. When we entered the church, we found it well filled, and

the atmosphere almost stifling. Brother Mellowby was "exhorting," but, from a broad cross-aisle in front of the pews, up and down which he walked, pausing now and then to turn and hurl impassioned appeals to his auditors. Whenever he stopped a moment to recover breath, a wild chorus of cries and groans arose, mingled with exclamations of "Amen!" "Glory!" "Go on, brother!" Speaker and hearers were evidently strung to the same pitch of excitement, and mutually inspired each other. Mr. Brandreth, Uncle Amos, and several prominent members of the congregation walked up and down the aisles, seizing upon the timid or hesitating, placing their arms about the necks of the latter, gently coaxing them to kneel, or, when wholly successful, leading them, sobbing and howling, to the "anxious seat" in front of the pulpit. These intermediate agents were radiant with satisfaction; the atmosphere of the place seemed to exhilarate and agreeably excite them. For my part, I looked on the scene with wonder, not unmixed with a sense of pain.

Brother Mellowby had been apparently engaged in

persuasive efforts up to the time of my entrance. Some twelve or fifteen persons had been moved, and were kneeling in various attitudes—some prostrate and silent, some crying and flinging up their arms convulsively—at the anxious seat. Others were weeping or groaning in their seats in the pews, but still hung back from the step which proclaimed them confessed sinners seeking for mercy. It was to these latter that the speaker now addressed himself with a new and more powerful effort.

I can only attempt to describe it. To my sensitive, beauty-loving nature, it was awful, yet pervaded with a wonderful fascination which held me to listen. He painted the future condition of the unconverted with an imagination as terrible as his vision of the Christian's heaven had been dazzling and lovely. It was a feat of word-painting, accompanied with dramatic gestures which brought the white-hot sulphur of hell to one's very feet, and with intonations of voice which suggested the eternal despair of the damned.

"There!" he cried, lifting his long arms high

above his head, and then bringing them down with a rushing swoop until his hands nearly touched the floor. "Sinners, there is your bed! In the burning lake—in the bottomless seas of fire—where the Evil that now flatters you with honeyed kisses shall sting and gnaw and torture for ever; where the fallen angels themselves shall laugh at your agonies, and the burning remorse of millions of ages shall not avail to open the gates of the pit! For you will be for ever sinking down—*down*—DOWN—DOWN, in the eternity of hell!"

He shouted out the last words as if crying from the depths of anguish he had depicted. His face was like that of a lost angel, grand and awful in its gloomy light. Exclamations of "Lord, have mercy!" "Lord, save me!" arose all over the church, and some of the mourners in front became frantic in their despairing appeals. Bolty, at my side, was sobbing violently. For myself, I felt oppressed and bewildered; my mind seemed to be narcotized by some weird influence, though I was not conscious of any terror on my soul's account.

Brother Mellowby's tone suddenly changed again. Stretching forth his hands imploringly, he called, in accents of piercing entreaty, "Why do ye delay? See, the Redeemer stands ready to receive you! Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. Kneel down at His feet; acknowledge Him; lay your burden into His willing hands. Oh, were your sins redder than scarlet, they shall be washed white; oh, were the gates now yawning to receive you, He would snatch you as a brand from the burning; oh, if your hearts are bruised and bleeding, they will be healed; oh, the tears will be wiped from your eyes; oh, your souls will rejoice and will sing aloud in gratitude and triumph, and you will feel the blessed assurance of salvation which the world cannot take away!"

Tears rolled down his cheeks as he uttered these words: a softer, yet not less powerful influence swayed the doubtful mourners. They shook as reeds in the wind, and one by one, amid shouts of "Glory! glory!" tottered forward, and sank down among the other suppliants.

I could not doubt the solemn reality of the scene. The preacher felt, with every fibre of his body, that he was announcing God's truth, and the "mourners," as they were called, were, for the hour at least, sincere in their self-accusations and their cry for some evidence of pardon. I comprehended also, from what I saw and heard, that there was indeed a crisis or turning-point of the excitement, beyond which the cries of penitence and supplication became joyful hosannas. There, before me, human souls seemed to be hovering in the balance, each fighting for itself the dread battle of Armageddon, the issue of which was to fix its eternal fate. Some were crouching in guilty fear of the wrath they had invoked, while others sprang upward with radiant faces, as if to grasp the garments of the invisible herald of mercy. The tragedy of our spiritual nature, in all its extremes of agony and joy, was there dimly enacted.

It was impossible to stand still and behold all this unmoved. I was not conscious of being touched, either by the terror or the promise; but a human

sympathy with the passion of the fluctuating, torn and shattered spirits around me—drifted here and there like the eddies of ghosts in the circles of Dante's "Purgatorio"—filled me with boundless pity. The tears were running down my face before I knew it. Yet I could not repress a feeling of astonishment when I saw the impassive Bolty led forward, weeping and roaring for mercy, and bend down his bullet-head in the midst of the mourners.

Presently Uncle Amos came towards me. He laid his hand affectionately upon my shoulder, and said, with a tone in which there was triumph as well as persuasion, "Ah, I see you are touched at last, John. Now you will know what it is to experience religion. The gates are opened this night, and there is joy and glory enough for all. Come forward, and let us pray together."

He took hold of my arm, but I drew back. I could not plunge into that chaos of shrieks and sobbing around the "anxious seat."

"How?" said my uncle, in grave surprise: "with

all this testimony of the saving power of grace, you are not willing to pray?"

"Oh, yes," I answered, "I am willing to pray."

"Come, then."

"I need not go there to do it. I can pray, in my heart, here just as well."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it was thus that the Pharisee prayed; but the poor publican, who threw himself on the ground and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' made the prayer which was accepted."

"No, Uncle Amos," I retorted, "the publican did not throw himself upon the ground. The Bible says he *stood* afar off, and smote upon his breast."

I was perfectly earnest and sincere in what I said, but I verily believe that my uncle suspected a hidden sarcasm in my words. He left me abruptly, and I soon saw him in conversation with the Rev. Mr. Brandreth, in the forward part of the aisle. It was not long before the latter, stopping by the way to stoop and whisper encouragement into the ears of some who were kneeling in the pews, approached

the place where I stood. I knew immediately that he had been sent, but I did not shrink from the encounter, because, so far as I knew him, I had found him to be an amiable and kind-hearted man. My tears of sympathy were already dry, but I felt that I was trembling and excited.

"Brother Godfrey," said the clergyman, "are you ready to-night to acknowledge your Saviour?"

"I have always done it," I answered; "I belong to the Lutheran Church."

"You are a professing Christian, then?"

I did not precisely know what meaning he attached to the word "professing," but I answered, "Yes."

"We accept all such to free communion with us. Come and unite with us in prayer for these perishing souls!"

I again declined, giving him the same reason as I had given to my uncle. But the clergyman's reply to this plea was not so easy to evade.

"In the hearing of God," said he, "your prayer may be just as fervent; but, so far as your fellow-mortals are concerned, it is lost. While you stand

here, you are counted among the cold and the indifferent. Give a visible sign of your pious interest, my brother; think that some poor, timorous soul, almost ready to acknowledge its sin and cry aloud for pardon, may be helped to eternal salvation by your example. Come forward and pray for and with them who are just learning to pray. If you feel the blessed security in your own heart, oh, come and help to pour it into the hearts of others!"

Hè said much more to the same effect, and I found it very difficult to answer him. I was bewildered and distressed, and my only distinct sensation was that of pain. The religious sentiment in my nature seemed to be racked and tortured, not serenely and healthfully elevated. But I was too young to clearly comprehend either myself or others, and I saw no way out of the dilemma except to kneel, as Mr. Brandreth insisted, and pray silently for the rest of the evening.

I therefore allowed him to lead me forward. The congregation, of course, supposed that I came as another mourner—another treasure-trove, cast up

from the raging deeps—and greeted my movement with fresh shouts and hosannas. Uncle Amos gave a triumphant exclamation of “Glory!” or, rather, “GULLOW-RY!” as he pronounced it, in the effort to make as much as possible out of the word. Brother Mellowby tossed back his floating hair, threw out his long arms, and cried, “Another—still another! Oh, come all! this night there is rejoicing in heaven! This night the throne of hell totters!”

The “anxious seat” was painful to contemplate at a distance, but there was something terrifying in a nearer view. A girl of twenty, whose comb had been broken in tearing off her bonnet, leaped up and down, with streaming hair, clapping her hands, and shouting, or rather chanting, “Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!” Another lay upon her back on the floor, screaming, while Aunt Peggy, leaning over the back of the next pew, fanned her face with a palm-leaf fan. The men were less violent in their convulsions, but their terrible weeping and sobbing was almost more than I could bear to hear.

I was glad to sink into some vacant place, and bury my face in my hands, that I might escape, in a measure, from the curious eyes of the unconverted spectators and the mistaken rejoicings of the church-members. On either side of me was a strong, full-grown man—one motionless, and groaning heavily from time to time; while the other, after spasms, during which he threw up his head and arms, and literally howled, fell down again, and confessed his secret sins audibly at my very ear. He was either unconscious of the proximity of others, or carried too far in his excitement to care for it. I could not avoid hearing the man's acknowledged record of guilt—let not the reader imagine that I ever betrayed him—and I remember thinking, even in the midst of my own bewilderment, that he was a very venial sinner, at the worst, and his distress was altogether out of proportion to his offences. God would certainly pardon him. This thought led me to an examination of my own life. To Uncle Amos I had rather indignantly repelled the epithet of "sinner," but might I not, after all, be more culpable than I

had supposed? Was there nothing on account of which I might not plead for the Divine pardon?

But I was not allowed to proceed far in this silent survey of my life. Supposing, after my conversation with Mr. Brandreth, that the attitude and fact of prayer was all that was required of me, as an evidence of sympathy and a possible help to some hesitating soul, I made no further demonstrations, but knelt, with my arms upon the bench and my forehead bowed upon them. I was beginning to collect my confused thoughts, when a lamenting female voice was heard at my ear, "How do you feel, John?"

If a feeling of exasperation at such a place and time was sinful, I sinned. "Aunt Peggy," I said, somewhat sternly (for I knew that unless I made answer the question would be repeated)—"Aunt Peggy, I am trying to pray."

She left me, but I was not long alone. As soon as I heard a combined creaking of boot-soles and knee-joints behind me, I knew whose voice would follow. I was patted on the back by a large dumpy

hand, and Uncle Amos said, in a hollow undertone, "That's right, John; pray on! Shall I help you to throw down your burden?"

My nerves twitched and drew back, as his heavy arm stole across my neck. This was the climax of my distress, and I plucked up a desperate courage to meet it. "Uncle Amos," said I, "I can neither pray nor think here, among these people. Let me go home to my room, and I promise you that, before I sleep to-night, I will know what is in my heart, and what are its relations to God!"

Mr. Brandreth was standing near, and heard my words. At least, some voice which I took to be his, whispered, "I think it will be best." I have a dim recollection of getting out of the church by the door in the rear of the pulpit; of my aunt walking home beside me, under the starry sky, uttering lamentations to which I paid no heed; of rushing breathlessly up the staircase to my garret, opening the window, drawing a chair beside it, resting my chin on the window-sill, and shedding tears of pure joy and relief on finding myself alone in the holy peace

and silence of the night. The presence of God came swiftly down to me from the starry deeps. "Here is my heart!" cried a voice in my breast; "look at it, Father, and tell me what I am!"

Then I seemed to behold it myself, and strove to disentangle the roots of self from the memory of my boyish life, that I might stand apart and judge it. I found pride, impatience, folly; but they were as ight surface-waves which disappeared with their cause. I found childish likes and dislikes; silly little enmities, which had left no sting; pranks, instigated by the spirit of Fun rather than that of Evil; and later, secret protests against the sorrows and trials of my life. But all these things gave me less trouble than one little incident which perversely clung to my memory, and still does, with a sense of shame which I shall never be able to overcome. Several of us boys were playing about the tavern at the Cross-Keys, one afternoon in August, when a dealer in water-melons came by with a cart-load of them for sale. We looked on, with longing eyes and watery mouths, while he disposed of several;

and at last the dealer generously gave us one which had been several times "plugged," and was cracked at one end. We hurried under the barn-bridge with our treasure, and agreed to take "slice about," so as to have an equal division. The crack, however, divided the solid, sweet, crimson centre from the seedy strip next the rind—so we commenced with the latter, leaving a tower of delicious aspect standing in the midst of the melon. I looked at it until I became charmed, entranced, insane with desire to crush its cool, sugared filigree upon my tongue, and when my next turn came, stretched forth a daring hand, and cut off the tower! The other boys looked at each other: one gave a long whistle; one exclaimed "Goy!" and the third added the climax by the sentence, "What a hog!" Before I had finished eating the tower it had turned to gall and wormwood in my mouth. I choked it down, however, and went home, without touching the melon again.

That night, as I leaned upon the window-sill, and recalled my faults and frailties, this incident came

back and placed itself in the front rank of my offences. I could look calmly, or with a scarcely felt remainder of penitence, upon all else, but my humiliation for this act burned as keenly as on the first day. It so wearied me, finally, that I gave up the retrospect. I was satisfied that God's omnipotent love, not his wrath, overhung and embraced me; that my heart, though often erring and clouded, never consciously lusted after evil. I longed for its purification, not for its change. I should not shrink from Death, if he approached, through fear of the hereafter; I might receive a low seat in Paradise, but I certainly had done nothing—and would not, with God's help—to deserve the awful punishment which Brother Mellowby had described.

In relating this portion of my life, I trust that I shall not be misunderstood. I owe reverence to the spirit of Devotion, in whatever form it is manifested, and have no intention of assailing, or even undervaluing, that which I have just described. There are, undoubtedly, natures which can only be reached by brandishing the menace of retribution—perhaps,

also, by the agency of strong physical excitement. I do not belong to such. Religion enters my heart through the gateway of Love, and not that of Fear. The latter entrance was locked, and the key thrown away, almost before I can remember it. Brother Mellowby's revival had an influence upon my after-fortunes, as will be seen presently, and I therefore relate it precisely as it occurred.

Two hours passed away while I sat at the open window. I cannot now reproduce all the movements of my mind, nor follow the devious ways by which, at the last, I reached the important result—peace. When it was over, I felt languid in body, but at heart immensely cheered and strengthened. I foresaw that trouble awaited me, but I was better armed to meet it.

I had scarcely gone to bed before Bolty made his appearance. From the suppressed shouts of "Glory! Glory!" as he was ascending the last flight of stairs, I knew that he had "got through," to use Uncle Amos's expression. I therefore counterfeited sleep, and was regaled with snatches of triumphant hymns,

and a very long and hoarsely audible prayer, delivered at the foot of the bed, before he became subdued enough to sleep. The powers of his big body must have been severely taxed, for, when I arose in the morning, he still lay locked in a slumber as heavy and motionless as death. In fact, he did not awake until nearly noon, Uncle Amos not allowing him to be disturbed. The latter looked at me sharply and frequently during the day, but he had no opportunity for reference to my spiritual condition, except in the course of the unusually prolonged grace at dinner. He prayed with unction both for Bolty and myself.

In the evening, when he announced that we might again put up the shutters at eight o'clock, in order to attend the services, I quietly said—

“It isn't necessary, Uncle Amos. I am not going to your church this evening.”

He grew very red about the jaws, and the veins on his forehead swelled. “What did you promise me last evening?” he asked.

“I have kept my promise,” I answered. “It

would be a mockery if I should go forward with the rest to repent of sins which have been already forgiven. I understand now what you mean by a change of heart, but I do not need it."

Uncle Amos threw up his hands, and exclaimed, "Lord, deliver me from vanity of heart!" Aunt Peggy, in her dingy bombazine bonnet, fell into spasms of clucking, and this time did really shed a few tears, as she cried, "To think that one o' *my* family should be so hardened!"

"I should like to know where the Pharisees are now!" I cried, not with anger.

"Come, wife — let us pray to-night for the obdurate sinner!" said my uncle, taking her by the arm. Bolty followed, and they all went to church, leaving me in the store.

After I had closed for the night, I resumed my post at the bedroom-window, and reflected upon my probable position in the house. It had hitherto been barely endurable to a youth of my tastes and my ambition, but now I foresaw that it would become insupportable. Neither uncle nor aunt, I was

sure, would ever look upon me with favour ; and even Bolty, who had thus far tacitly befriended me, might think it his duty to turn informer and persecutor. I much more than earned my board by my services, and therefore recognized no moral obligation towards my uncle. The legal one still existed, but it could not force me to lead a slavish and unhappy life against my will. I should not get possession of my little property for a year and a half ; but I could certainly trust to my own resources of hand or brain, in the meantime. The matter was soon settled in my mind : I would leave " A. Woolley's Grocery Store " for ever.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING MY ESTABLISHMENT IN UPPER
SAMARIA.

I DEVOTED my first leisure hour to a confidential visit to Charley Rand. His smooth, amiable ways had done much to make our intercourse closer than it ever had been at school, though there was still something in his face which led me occasionally to distrust him. His mottled grey eyes, which *could* look at one steadily and sweetly, were generally restless, and the mellowness of his voice sometimes showed its want of perfect training by slipping into a harsher natural tone. Besides, he was a little too demonstrative. His habit of putting his hand on my shoulder and commencing a remark with (emphasizing

every word) "MY—DEAR—FRIEND," made me feel very uncomfortable. Nevertheless, his presence in Reading was a satisfaction to me, and I bestowed a great deal of friendly affection upon him for the reason that there was no one else to whom I could give it.

To him, then, I related all that had happened. The habits of the future lawyer seemed to be already creeping over him. He interrupted my narrative with an occasional question, in order to make certain points clearer, and, when I had finished, meditated a while in silence. "It's a pity," he said at last, "that I'm not already admitted to practice, and sporting my own shingle. I should like to know your uncle, anyhow: can't you introduce me?"

I felt a great repugnance to this proposal, and urged Rand not to insist upon it.

"Oh, well," said he, carelessly, "it's of no consequence, except on *your* account. I'm sure I have no inclination to meet the old porpoise. But I'd advise you to work along, the best way you can, until you can get a better hook on him than you have now."

"No, Rand!" I interrupted; "my mind is made up. I shall leave his house."

In the course of the conversation Rand had managed to extract from me the amount of my own little property, and the disposition of the interest due the previous spring, the greater part of which I had allowed my uncle to reinvest. He also questioned me concerning the latter's fortune, and seemed desirous to know a great many particulars which had no apparent bearing on the present crisis in my fortunes. Our talk ended, however, in my repeating my determination to leave.

"I hoped, Rand," I added, "that you could advise me what to do. I can only think of two things—teaching a country school, or getting a situation in another store. Of course, I should rather teach."

"Then, if you are bent upon it, Godfrey, I think I can help you. One of Mulford's clients, from Upper Samaria township—not far from Cardiff, you know—was talking about a teacher for their school, three or four days ago. He's a director, and has the most say, as he's a rich old fellow. I'll tell Mulford to recom-

mend you, if you've a mind to try it, and meanwhile you can write to Dr. Dymond for a certificate of your fitness. If the plan succeeds—and I don't see why it shouldn't—you may say good-bye to the old porpoise in less than ten days."

I seized Rand's hand, and poured out my gratitude; here was a way opened at once! I should have pleasant employment for the winter, at least, and a little capital in the spring to pursue my fortune further. The same evening I wrote to Dr. Dymond, and in four days received a stiffly-worded, but very flattering testimony of my capacities. In the beginning of the next week, Mulford's client, a Mr. Bratton, came again to Reading, and Rand was as good as his word. He recommended me so strongly that Mr. B—— requested an interview, which was at once arranged. Rand came for me, and we met in Mulford's back-office.

The director, upon whom my success mainly depended, was a bluff, hearty man, with a pompous and patronizing manner. "Ah, you are the young man," he said, stretching out his hand, and surveying

me the while from head to foot—"should have liked a little more signs of authority—very necessary where there are big boys in the school. However, mine is not a rough neighbourhood—very much in advance of Lower Samaria."

I handed him Dr. Dymond's letter, which he ran through, with audible comments;—"promising scholar"—good, but hardly enough for me;—"thorough acquaintance with grammar"—ah, very good—my own idee;—"talent for composition," 'Latin,'—rather ornamental, *ra-a-ther*;—hem, 'all branches of arithmetic'—that's more like business. A very good recommendation, upon the whole. How much do you expect to be paid?"

I replied that I wanted no more than the usual remuneration, admitting that I had never yet taught school, but that I should make every effort to give satisfaction.

"We pay from twenty to twenty-five dollars a month," said he; but you couldn't expect more than twenty at the start. You're a pig in a poke, you know."

This was not very flattering; but as I saw that no offence was intended, I took none—nay, I even smiled good-humouredly at Mr. Bratton's remark, and thereby won his good-will. When we parted, the engagement was almost made.

“For form's sake,” said he, “I must consult the other directors; but I venture to say that my recommendation will be sufficient. If you come, I shall depend upon you to justify my selection.”

I now judged it necessary to inform my uncle of the contemplated step. I presume the idea of it had never entered his head; his surprise was so great that he seemed at a loss what course to take. When he found that both opposition and ridicule were of no avail, he tried persuasion, and even went so far as to promise me immunity from persecution in religious matters.

“We will let that rest for the present,” said he. “My ways ain't your'n, though I've tried to bring you to a proper knowledge of your soul, for your own good. I promised your mother I'd do my dooty by you, but you don't seem to take it in a numble

spirit. But now you're acquainted with business, in a measure, and likely to turn out well if you stick to it. I'd always reckoned on paying you a selery after you come of age; it's a sort of apprenticeship till then. And you've a little capital, and can make it more. I don't say but what I couldn't take you, in the course of time, as a pardner in the concern."

I tried to explain that my taste and ambition lay in a totally opposite direction—that I neither could nor would devote my life to the mysteries of the grocery business. It required some time to make my uncle comprehend my sincerity. He looked upon the matter as the temporary whim of a boy. When, at last, he saw that my determination was inflexible, his anger returned, more violently than at first.

"Go, then!" he cried; "I wash my hands of you! But this let me tell you—look out for yourself till you're twenty-one! Not a penny of your money will I advance till the law tells me—and more, not a penny of *mine* will you get when I die!"

These words roused an equal anger in my heart. I felt myself turning white, and my voice trembled

in spite of myself as I exclaimed, "Keep your accursed money! Do you think I would soil my fingers with it? Holy as you are, and sinful as I am, I look down upon you and thank God no mean thoughts ever entered my heart!"

The breach was now impassable. I had cut off the last bridge to reconciliation. Nothing more was said, and I quietly and speedily made my preparations for leaving the house. Bolty, whose manner had become exceedingly mild and subdued since his conversion, did not seem much surprised by the catastrophe. Perhaps he regretted the loss of a companion, but his personal emotions were too shallow to give him much uneasiness. I watched, with some curiosity, to see whether he would still recommend his patent medicines in the accustomed style; but even here he was changed. With an air of quiet gravity, he affirmed, "The pills is reckoned to be very good; we sell a great many, ma'am. Them that cares for their perishin' bodies is relieved by 'em."

This mode of recommendation seemed to be just as effectual as the former.

Two days afterwards a note arrived from Mr. Bratton, and I left my uncle's house. There were no touching farewells, and no tears shed except Aunt Peggy's, as she exclaimed, "I wouldn't have believed it of you ; but you'll rue it!—*ts, ts, ts, ts*,—you'll rue it, too late!" In spite of this evil prediction, I think she must have felt a little shame at seeing her sister's child leave her doors in the way I did.

A rude mail-coach took me as far as Cardiff, where I left my trunk at the tavern, and set out on foot for the residence of Mr. Bratton. It was Friday ; I was to be presented to the directors on Saturday, and to open school on Monday. Upper Samaria was only three miles from Cardiff—the latter place, a village of some four hundred inhabitants, being the post-office for the region round about.

It was a bright, cheery day. A bracing wind blew from the north-west, shaking the chestnuts from their burrs and the shell-barks from their split hulls. The farmers and their men sat in the fields, each before his¹ overturned shock, and husked the long, yellow ears of corn. I passed a load of apples on their way

to the cider-press, and the sunburnt driver grinned with simple good-will as he tossed me a ruddy "wine-sap." Never before had I breathed so exquisite an atmosphere of freedom. I stood at last on my own independent feet, in the midst of the bright, autumnal world. Wind and sun, the rustling trees and the hastening waters, the labourers looked up as I passed, and somewhere, deep in the blue overhead, the Spirit that orders and upholds every form of life seemed to recognize me as a creature competent to take charge of his own destiny. On the hill-tops I paused and stretched forth my arms like a discoverer taking possession of new lands. The old continent of dependence and subjection lay behind me, and I saw the green shores of the free, virgin world.

Happy ignorance of youth that grasps life as a golden bounty, not as a charge to be guarded with sleepless eyes and weary heart! Surely some movement of Divine pity granted us that blindness of vision in which we only see the bloom of blood on cheek and lip, not the dark roots that branch below

—the garlanded mask of joy hiding the tragic mystery!

After a while, the rolling upland over which I had been wandering, sank gently towards the south-east into a broad, softly outlined valley, watered by a considerable stream. The landlord at Cardiff had given me minute directions, so that when I saw a large mill-pond before me, with a race leading to an old stone-mill, a white house behind two immense weeping-willows on the left, and a massive brick house on the right, across the stream, I knew that the latter edifice must be the residence of Mr. (or "Squire") Septimus Bratton. The main highway followed the base of some low, gradual hills on the left bank, and a furlong beyond "Yule's Mill," as the place was called, I noticed a square, one-story hut, with pyramidal roof, which I was sure must be the school-house. A little further, another road came across the hills from the eastward, and at the junction there were a dozen buildings, comprising, as I afterwards discovered, the store, the blacksmith's and shoemaker's shops, and "The Buck" tavern,

where, on election days, the polls for Upper Samaria were held. Down the stream, the view extended for two or three miles over rich, admirably cultivated farm-land, interspersed with noble tracts of wood, and with clumps of buttonwood and ash trees along the course of the stream.

Mr. Bratton's house stood upon a knoll, commanding a very agreeable view of the valley. It was a large cube of red brick, with high double chimneys at each end, and a veranda in front supported by white Ionic columns of wood. A dense environment of Athenian poplars and silver maples buried the place in shade, while the enclosure sloping down to the road was dotted with balsam-fir and arbor-vitæ. The fact that this lawn—if it could be so called—covered an acre of ground, and was grown with irregular tufts of natural grass, instead of being devoted to potatoes, indicated wealth. In the rear rose a huge barn, with a stable-yard large enough to hold a hundred cattle.

I walked up a straight, central path, trodden in the grass, and ungravelled, to the front-door, and

knocked. Footsteps sounded somewhere within and then died away again. After waiting ten minutes, I repeated the knocking, and presently the door was opened. I beheld a lovely girl of seventeen, in a pale green dress, which brought a faint rose-tint to a face naturally colourless. Her light grey eyes rested gently on mine, and I know that I blushed with surprise and confusion. She did not seem to be in the least embarrassed, but stood silently waiting for me to speak.

"Is Mr. Bratton at home?" I finally stammered.

"Pa and Ma have gone to Carterstown this afternoon," said she, in the smoothest, evenest, most delicious voice I had ever heard. "They will be back soon; will you walk in and wait?"

"Yes, if you please," I answered. I think Mr. Bratton expects me; my name is Godfrey."

I am sure she had already guessed who I was. She betrayed no sign of the fact, however, but demurely led the way to a comfortable sitting-room, asked me take a seat, and retired, leaving me alone. I stole across the carpet to a small mirror

between the windows, straightened the bow of my cravat, ran my fingers through my hair to give it a graceful disposition, and examined my features one by one, imagining how they would appear to a stranger's eye.

I had scarcely resumed my seat before Miss Bratton returned, with a blue pitcher in one hand and a tumbler in the other.

"Will you have a glass of new cider, Mr. Godfrey?" she asked, dropping her eyes an instant. "It's sweet," she added; "you can take it without breaking the pledge."

"Oh, of course," I answered; for, although I was not a member of a Temperance Society, I thought *she* might be. She stood near me, holding the pitcher while I drank, and it seemed to me that there was a noise of deglutition in my throat which might be heard all over the house.

She took a seat near the opposite window, with some sort of net-work in her hand. I felt that it was incumbent on me to commence the conversation, which I did awkwardly enough, I suppose; her slow,

even, liquid words forming a remarkable contrast to my rapid and random utterances. At length, however, I got so far as to inform her that I hoped to teach in the neighbouring school-house during the coming winter.

"Ind-e-e-ed!" she exclaimed, in an accent of polite, subdued interest. "Then we shall be neighbours; for I suppose you will board at Yule's. All the schoolmasters do."

"The white house with the willows?"

"Yes. Mr. Yule is Pa's miller. He has been there twenty years, I think Pa said. I'm sure it was long before I was born. They are very respectable people, and it's nicer there than to board at 'The Buck.'"


I was about to reply that the choice of the directors must be made before I could engage board anywhere, when she interrupted me with, "Oh, there's Pa's carriage just turning the corner. Excuse me!" and walked from the room with a swift, graceful step.

In a few minutes I heard a heavy foot, followed by

a rustling, along the veranda, and Mr. and Mrs. Septimus Bratton entered the room. The former greeted me with stately cordiality. "I see," said he, "that you have already made my daughter's acquaintance. My dear, this is Mr. Godfrey, whom *I* have recommended as our teacher this winter."

Mrs. Bratton, a sharp-featured little woman, swathed in an immense white crape shawl, advanced and gave me her hand. "How d'ye do, sir?" she piped, in a shrill voice; "hope you've not been kept long a-waiting?"

Then she and the daughter retired, and Mr. Bratton flung his hat upon the table and sat down. "I guess there'll be no difficulty to-morrow," he remarked; "I've seen Bailey, one of the directors, and he's willing to abide by me. As for Carter, he thinks something of his learning, and always has a few questions to ask; but we had a poor shoat last winter, of his choosing, and so you'll have the better chance. You'll board at Yule's, but you may as well stay here till to-morrow, after we meet. 'Tisn't good luck to give a baby its name before it's christened.



You can send up to Cardiff for your things when the matter is settled."

We were presently summoned to the early tea-table of the country. When Mrs. Bratton was about to take her seat, her daughter murmured—oh, so musically!—"Let me pour out, ma, you must be tired."

"Well, have your own way, 'Manda," said the mother; "you'll be getting your hand in, betimes."

I was first served, the lovely Amanda kindly asking me, "Shall I season your tea for you, Mr. Godfrey?"

It was the sweetest cup I had ever tasted.

"Where's Sep?" suddenly asked Mr. Bratton.

"I've sent out to the barn and down to the mill, but they don't seem to find him," his wife remarked.

"I'll go to 'The Buck,' then; but I won't go much oftener."

I saw wife and daughter suddenly glance at him, and he said no more. But he was in a visible ill-humour. There was a lack of lively conversation during the evening, yet to me the time passed delightfully. Miss Bratton, I discovered, had just

returned from the celebrated School for Young Ladies at Bethlehem, and was considered, in Upper Samaria, as a model of female accomplishment. She had learned to write Italian hand, to paint tulips and roses on white velvet, to make wax-flowers, and even to play the piano; and an instrument ordered by her father, at the immense price of two hundred dollars, was then on its way from Philadelphia. These particulars I learned afterwards from Mrs. Yule. During that evening, however, I saw and admired the brilliant bouquets in mahogany frames which adorned the parlour-walls.

At nine o'clock, Mr. Bratton, who had already several times yawned with a loud, bellowing noise, rose, took a candle, and showed me to a large and gorgeous chamber. The bedstead had pillars of carved mahogany, supporting a canopy with curtains, and I sank into the huge mass of feathers as into a sun-warmed cloud. I stretched myself out in all directions, with the luxurious certainty of not encountering Bolty Himpel's legs, composed my mind to an unspoken prayer, and floated into dreams

where Aunt Peggy and Miss Amanda Bratton had provokingly changed voices.

The next morning, at ten o'clock, the directors met at the school-house. Mr. Bratton, who had charge of the key, opened the shutters and let out the peculiar musty smell, suggestive of mould, bread-and-butter, and greasy spelling-books, which had accumulated. He then took his seat at the master's desk, and laid the proposal before Messrs. Bailey and Carter. He read Dr. Dymond's letter of recommendation, and finished by saying, "Mr. Godfrey, I believe, is ready for any examination you may wish to make."

Mr. Bailey remarked, in a sleepy voice, "I guess that'll do; but Mr. Carter, a wiry, nervous little man, pricked up his ears, stroked his chin, and said, "I've got a few questions to put. Spell '*inooendo*.'"

I spelled in succession the words "innuendo," "exhilarate," "pedler," and "pony," to the gentleman's satisfaction, and gave, moreover, the case of the noun "disobedience," in the first line of "Paradise Lost," and the verb which governed it. Then I

calculated the number of boards ten feet long, thirteen inches wide, and one inch thick, which could be sawed out of a pine log three feet in diameter and seventy feet long; then the value of a hundred dollars, at compound interest, six per cent., for twenty years; and, finally, the length of time it would take a man to walk a mile, supposing he made ten steps, two feet long, in a minute, and for every two steps forward took one step, one foot long, backwards. I think Mr. Carter would have been vexed if I had not made a mistake of three cents on the compound interest question. Furthermore, I wrote on a sheet of paper, "*Avoid haughtiness of behaviour and affectation of manners,*" as a specimen of my penmanship, and read aloud parts of a speech of Patrick Henry, from the "Columbian Orator." Geography and the various branches of natural philosophy were passed over in silence, and I was a little surprised that the fact of my never having taught school before was not brought forward in objection. After Mr. Carter had exhausted his budget of questions, I was requested to step

outside for a few minutes while the directors consulted.

When Mr. Bratton called me, I saw by his slightly increased pomposity that I was accepted. His choice was confirmed; and as the "poor shoat" of the previous winter had been taken on Carter's recommendation, it was now my patron's turn to triumph. My salary was fixed at twenty-five dollars a month, and I was gratified to find that my board and washing at Yule's would cost me but a dollar and a half per week. This secured me the prospect of a capital of some fifty or sixty dollars in the spring.

Mr. Bratton completed his patronage by presenting me to the Yule family. The plain, honest face of the old miller made a fatherly impression upon me, and Mrs. Yule, a bustling, talkative woman,—a chronicle of all the past and present gossip of the neighbourhood,—accepted me as a predestined member of the family. She had already put "the master's room" in order, she said; it never went by any other name in the house, and she allowed a fire in cold weather, only "the master" always carried up his own wood,

and kindled it, and raked the ashes carefully before going to bed; and Daniel was going to Cardiff that very night for the paper, and he should take the light cart and bring my trunk,—so I could stop then and there, while I was about it. Which I did.

“Daniel” was the older son,—a tall, lusty fellow of twenty-four. There was a younger, Isaac, about my own age, and a daughter, Susan, between the two. I met the whole family at dinner, and before the meal was over, felt that I was fast becoming an Upper Samaritan.

CHAPTER XI.

CONTAINING BRATTON'S PARTY AND THE EPISODE OF
THE LIME-KILN.

WHEN I opened school on Monday morning, I had some twenty pupils, mostly the younger children of the neighbouring farmers. The late autumn was unusually clear and mild, and the larger boys were still needed in the fields. I was glad of this chance, as it enabled me the more easily to get the machinery of the school in motion and familiarize myself with my duties. I recollected enough of our commencement-days at the Cross-Keys to form my pupils into classes and arrange the order of exercises. So far as the giving of instruction was concerned, I had no misgivings, but I feared the natural and universal

rebellion of children against rules which impose quiet and application of mind. Accordingly, I took the master's seat at my desk on a small raised platform, with stern gravity of countenance, and instantly checked the least tendency to whisper or giggle among my subjects. The process was exhausting, and I should like to know which side felt the greatest relief when the first day came to an end.

In a short time, however, as I came to know the faces and dispositions of the children, I found it necessary to relax something of this assumed strictness. Dr. Dymond's method, which I had found so pleasant, seemed to me better adapted to their needs, also, and I frequently interrupted the regular sequence of the lessons in order to communicate general intelligence, especially of a geographical or historical character, wherein they were all lamentably deficient. I had a great liking for oral narrative, and perhaps some talent in constructing it, for I always found these breaks more efficient to preserve order than my sternest scolding.

I soon saw that the children enjoyed my method

of instruction. Many a bell-flower and fall pippin was laid upon my desk in the morning, and some of the girls, noticing that I gathered gentians and late asters in the meadows during their nooning, brought me bunches of chrysanthemums from their mothers' flower-beds. I should have soon found my place insupportable, had I been surrounded by hostile hearts, children's though they were, and was therefore made happy by seeing that my secret favourites returned my affection in their own shy way. Mrs. Yule, who had a magnetic ear for hearing everything that was said within a radius of two miles, informed me that I was much better liked by the pupils than last winter's master, though some of the parents thought that I told them too many "fancy things."

This was the sunny side of the business, so far as it had one. On the other hand I grew weary to death of enlightening the stupidity of some of the boys, and disgusted with their primitive habits. I shuddered when I was obliged to touch their dirty, sprawling, warty hands, or when my eyes fell upon the glazed streaks on their sleeves. They surrounded

me with unwashed smells, and scratched their heads more than was pleasant to behold. Physical beauty was scarce among them, and natural refinement, in any sensible degree, entirely absent. A few had frank, warm hearts, and hints of undeveloped nobility in their natures, but coarseness and selfishness were predominant. My experience convinced me that I should never become a benefactor of the human race. It was not the moral sentiment in the abstract, but that of certain individuals, which inspired me with interest.

My home at the white house behind the willows was a very agreeable one. There was a grand old kitchen, paved with flag-stones, and with a chimney large enough to contain a high-backed wooden settle, on either side of the fire. Here the old miller and Dan smoked their pipes after supper, while Mrs. Yule and Susan pared apples, or set the bread to rise, or mixed buckwheat-batter for next morning's cakes. I could place my tallow-candle in a little niche, or pocket of the jamb, and read undisturbed, until some quaint lore of the neighbourhood drew me

from the book. The windows of my room in the south-eastern corner of the house were wrapped about with the trailing willow-boughs; but, as their leaves began to fall, I discovered that I should have a fine winter view down the valley.

The miller was one of those quiet, unmarked natures, which, like certain greys in painting, are agreeable through their very lack of positive character. He suggested health—nothing else; and his son Dan was made in his likeness. I did not know, then, why I liked Dan, but I suspect now it must have been because he had not an over-sensitive nerve in his body. His satisfied repose was the furthest vibration from my restless, excitable temperament. Susan was a bright, cheerful, self-possessed girl, in whose presence the shyest youth would have felt at ease. She was not cultivated, but neither was she ashamed of her ignorance. Her only æsthetic taste was for flowers; there were no such pot gillyflowers and geraniums as hers in all Upper Samaria. She sewed buttons on my shirts and darned the heels of my stockings before my very eyes. It was rumoured

that she was engaged to Ben Hannaford, a young farmer over the hill to the north; but she spoke of him in so straightforward and unembarrassed a way that I judged it could not be possible. Still, it was a fact that a fire was made in the best sitting-room every Sunday night, and that both Ben and Susan somehow disappeared from the kitchen.

The ways of the neighbourhood were exceedingly social. There were frequent "gatherings" ("getherin's" was the popular term) of the younger people generally on Saturday evenings. The first which I attended was given by Miss Amanda Bratton, about three weeks after my arrival. The impulse thereto was furnished, I imagine, by the arrival of the new piano from Philadelphia. Everybody on the main road, from Carterstown up to "The Buck" tavern, had seen the waggon with the great box lying on trusses of straw, as it passed along, and the news had gone far to right and left before it was announced that "Squire Bratton's" house would be open. Pianos were not common in Upper Samaria; indeed, there were none nearer than Carterstown, and the young

men and women were unaccustomed to other music than the flute and violin. Miss Amanda, on her father's hint, was profuse in her invitations; he knew that the party would be much talked about, both before and after its occurrence.

I walked over with Dan and Susan Yule, at dusk, and found the company already arriving. The hall-door was open, and we were received at the entrance to the parlour by Miss Amanda, who looked lovely in a pale-violet silk. She gave me her hand with the composure of an old acquaintance, and I took it with a thrill of foolish happiness.

"*He's* not come yet, Sue," said she. "Mr. Godfrey, let me introduce you to the gentlemen."

I was presented to five or six sturdy fellows, each of whom gave me a tremendous grip of a large, hard hand, and then sat down in silence. They were ranged along one side of the parlour-wall, while the ladies formed a row on the opposite side, occasionally whispering to each other below their breath. I took my seat at one end of the male column, and entered into conversation with my neighbour, which he

accepted in a friendly and subdued manner. No one, I think, quite ventured to use his natural volume of voice except young Septimus, or Sep Bratton, who dodged back and forth with loud explosions of shallow wit and unjustifiable laughter. Many eyes were directed to the piano, which stood open at the end of the room, and it was evident that the tone of the company would be solemn expectation until the instrument had been heard.

Squire Bratton, in a high stock and sharp, standing collar, moved majestically about, greeting each fresh arrival with a mixture of urbanity and condescension. When all the chairs which could be comfortably placed were filled, and the gentlemen were obliged to stand, the company began to break into groups, and grow more animated. Then Miss Amanda was importuned to play.

"Oh, I'm really afraid, before so many!" she exclaimed, with a modesty which charmed me; "besides, the piano is hardly fit to be played on, is it, pa?"

"H'm—well," said her father, "I believe it is a

little out of chune, from being jolted on the road, but I guess our friends would make allowance for that."

"Oh, yes!" "We shan't notice it!" eagerly burst from a dozen voices.

After some further solicitation, Miss Amanda took her seat, and a breathless silence filled the room. She struck two or three chords, then suddenly ceased, saying, "Oh, I can't! I shall shock you; the G is *so flat*!"

"Go on!" "It's splendid!" and various other encouraging cries again arose.

I happened to be standing near the piano, and she caught my eye, expressing its share of the general expectancy.

"*Must* I, indeed, Mr. Godfrey?" she asked, in a helpless, appealing tone. "What shall it be?"

"*Your* favourite air, Miss Bratton," I answered.

She turned to the keys again, and, after a short prelude, played the Druids' March from "*Norma*," boldly and with a strongly accented rhythm. I was astonished at the delicacy of her ear, for I should not

have known but that the instrument was in very good tune.

When she had finished, the expressions of delight were loud and long, and "more" was imperiously demanded, coupled with a request for a song.

This time she gave us "Oh, come o'er the moonlit sea, love," and "The dream is past;" and I knew not which most to admire—the airy, dancing, tinkling brilliancy of the first, or the passion and sorrow of the second. No one, I thought, could sing that song without feeling the words in their tragic intensity: Miss Bratton must have a heart like Zuleika or Gulnare.

I believe I made a good appearance, as contrasted with the other young men present. I had fastened my cravat with a small coral pin which had belonged to my mother, and this constituted a distinguishing mark which drew many eyes upon me. Little by little, I was introduced to all the company, and was drawn into the lively chatter which, in such communities, takes the place of wit and sentiment.

Among others, Susan Yule presented me to Miss Verbena Cuff, a plump, rattling girl, who was not afraid to poke a fellow in the ribs with her forefinger, and say, "Oh, go 'long, now!" when anything funny was said. She had the fullest, ripest lips, the largest and whitest teeth, and the roundest chin, of any girl there.

After the refreshments—consisting of lemonade, new cider, and four kinds of cakes—were handed around, we all became entirely merry and unconstrained. I had never before "assisted" at a party of the kind, except as a juvenile spectator, and my enjoyment was therefore immense. Nothing more was needed to convince me that I was a full-grown man. Whenever I put my hand to my chin I was conscious of a delightful, sand-papery feeling, which showed that the down I so carefully scraped off was beginning to acquire strength, and would soon display masculine substance and colour. My freckles were all gone, and, as Neighbour Niles had always prophesied, left a smooth, fair skin behind them. I was greatly delighted on hearing one of the girls

whisper, "He's quite good-looking." Of course she referred to me.

Miss Amanda's album, gilt-edged and gorgeously bound in red morocco, lay upon a side-table under the mirror. I picked it up, and looked over its contents, in company with Miss Verbena Cuff. The leaves were softly tinted with pink, green, buff, and blue, and there were both steel engravings and bunches of flowers lithographed in colours. Miss Verbena stayed my hand at one of the pictures, representing a youth in Glengarry bonnet and knee-breeches, with one arm round a maiden, whose waist came just under her shoulders, while he waved the other arm over a wheat-field. In the air above them two large birds were flying.

The title of the picture was, "Now Westlin' Wins."

"Mr. Godfrey," said Miss Verbena, "I want you to tell me what this picture means; *she* won't. *I* say 'Westlin'' is the name of one o' the birds; they're flyin' a race, and he thinks 'Westlin'' will win it. What do *you* say?"

I looked up, and saw that "*she*" was standing near us, listening. I smiled significantly, with a side-glance at Miss Verbena. My smile was returned, yet with an expression of tender deprecation, which I interpreted as saying, "Don't expose her ignorance." I accordingly answered, with horrid hypocrisy :

"You may be right, Miss Cuff. I never saw the picture before." Again we exchanged delicious glances.

I turned over the leaves, and presently stumbled on the name of "Susan Yule." She had written,—

"Oh, Amanda, when I'm far away,
To taste the scenes of other climes,
And when fond memory claims its sway,
And tells thee then of happier times—
Oh, let a tear of sorrow blend
With memory of thy absent friend."

I was greatly diverted with the idea of good plain, simple-hearted Susan Yule, whose thoughts never crossed the township-line of Upper Samaria, going away to taste the scenes of other climes, but I

did my best, for her sake, to preserve a serious countenance. I was rather surprised to find, on looking further, that both Mattie McElroy and Jemima Ann Hutchins had written precisely the same lines.

"Why," I exclaimed, "here it is again! I thought the verse was original. There must be a great scarcity of album poetry, Miss Bratton?"

"Ye-e-es," she answered, in a gentle drawl. "We all found it so at school. I'm sure I went over the 'Elegant Extracts' ever so many times, but there was so little that would suit. I think it's *so* much nicer to have original poetry! don't you?"

I assented most enthusiastically.

"Perhaps *you* write poetry, Mr. Godfrey?" she continued.

I blushed and stammered, longing, yet shy to confess the blissful truth.

"He, he!" giggled Miss Verbena Cuff, giving me a poke with her forefinger; "he does! he does! I'll bet anything on it. Make him write something in your book, 'Manda!'"

"*Won't* you?" murmured Miss Amanda, fixing her soft, pale eyes full upon mine.

I blushed all over, this time. The red flushed my skin down to my very toes. My eyelids fell before the angelic gaze, and I muttered something about being very happy, and I would try, but I was afraid she wouldn't be satisfied with it afterwards.

"But it must be right out of your own head, mind," Miss Cuff insisted.

"*Of* course," said Miss Bratton, with slight but very becoming *hauteur*.

"And then you must write something for me. We won't say anything about it to the other girls, 'Manda, till they're finished."

I wasn't very well pleased with this proposition, and it seemed to me, also, that the merest gossamer of a shade flitted across Miss Bratton's smooth brow. Still, it was impossible to refuse, and I endeavoured to promise with a good grace.

"Mine has the language of flowers," said Verbena; "I'm so sorry that the rose is already writ. I'd have liked you to take that. There's pink and

honeysuckle left, and something else that I disremember. I'll show you the book first."

Later in the evening it happened that Miss Bratton and I came together again, with nobody very near us. I made instant use of the opportunity, to confirm the confidential relation which I imagined was already established between us. "I understood you," I said; "did you ever hear such an absurd idea as she had?"

She was evidently puzzled, but not startled. Nothing, in fact, seemed to agitate her serene, self-poised, maidenly nature. "Oh, the picture?" she said, at last; "very absurd, indeed."

"You know the poem, of course?" I continued.

"Yes" (slightly smiling); "I read it, long ago, but I've forgotten how it goes. Won't you write it down for me?"

I assented at once, though to do so implied the purchase of a copy of Burns, which I did not possess. How grateful it was to find *one* in that material crowd who knew and revered the immortal bards among whom I hoped to inscribe my name!

"I'll bring it over to you some evening!" I exclaimed.

She smiled sweetly, but said nothing.

"I am so glad you are fond of poetry! Do you ever see the 'Saturday Evening Post?'"

"Yes; Pa takes it for me. There are such *sweet* poems in it,—and the tales, too!"

Here we were interrupted, but I had heard enough to turn my head. She had certainly read "The Unknown Bard" and all the other productions of "Selim!" They were among the poems, and, of course, they too were "sweet."

The party broke up at midnight, and I had the pleasure of escorting Miss Verbena Cuff across the stream to Yule's Mill, where her brother Tom had left his horse and vehicle. We started with Dan and Susan Yule, but had scarcely left Bratton's veranda, before Miss Verbena took my arm and whispered, "Let's hang back a little; I want to tell you something."

I hung back, as desired, and we were soon alone under the dark, starry sky. I was wrapped in

dreams of Miss Amanda Bratton, the touch of whose slender fingers still burned on my right palm. Hence I did not manifest the curiosity which my companion, no doubt, awaited, for after walking a few rods in silence, she said, giving me a jog of her elbow—

“Well—what do you think it is?”

Thus admonished, I confessed my inability to guess.

“I’ll tell you, but don’t *you* tell nobody. Tom’s going to set the last kiln a-burning, Friday morning, and there’ll be a bully blaze by Saturday night. You know our house, don’t you?—stands on the left, a mile and a half this side of Carterstown,—stone, with brick chimbleys, and the barn t’other side of the road: you can’t miss it. Now, I want you to come, and we’ll have some fun. There won’t be many, and I don’t want it to get out—I’d rather it would seem accidental like. We *had* a getherin’ three weeks ago; but, you know, when the kiln’s a-fire, it seems to ’liven people up. Some say, the more the merrier, but it ain’t always so.”

Here she gave my arm an interrogative clutch ; and I, thinking of Milton's "fit audience, though few," answered, "No, indeed, Miss Cuff; it's also true that the fewer the nearer in heart."

"Then you'll come? You'll be sure and keep your word?"

I had not yet given my word, but the prospect of a select few assembled around the burning lime-kiln was weird, poetic, and by no means unwelcome. Of course Amanda Bratton would be one of the few, and I already speculated how wonderfully her calm face would appear in the blue gleam of the fire, against a background of night. I therefore exclaimed—

"Oh, I shall be delighted!"

"And you won't say anything?"

"Not a word!"

"Don't even tell Yules. I like Susan very much, but her fortune's made, they say, and I only want them that can take an interest in each other. You understand, don't you?"

Again I felt the powerful squeeze of her arm, and involuntarily returned it. She hung upon and

leaned against me quite alarmingly after that, but a few more steps brought us around the mill to the hitching-post at Yule's gate, where Tom Cuff, whip in hand, stood awaiting her.

"It's late, sis, and we must be off. Finish your sparkin', quick," he growled, in a coarse voice.

He thereupon turned his back, and Miss Verbena, giving me her hand, looked into my face in a momentary attitude of expectation which I did not understand. She jerked away her hand again rather hastily, whispered, "Don't forget—next Saturday night!" and then added, aloud, "Good-night, Mr. Godfrey!"

"Good-night, Miss Cuff!" I replied, and they drove away as I was mounting the projecting steps in the stone wall.

That week I made use of "the master's" privilege, and, beside a fire in my bedroom, devoted myself to the composition of a poem for Miss Bratton's album. I wrote four, and was then uncertain which to choose, or whether any one of them was worthy of its destined place. I finally fixed upon one entitled "A Parable,"

which represented a wandering bird of sweet song in a cold, dark forest, where the trees paid no heed to his lays. But just as he was becoming silent for ever, from despair of a listener, he saw a lovely flower lift up its head, open the lips of its blushing petals, and ask him to sing; so he built his nest at her feet, and piped his sweetest song in the fragrance of her being.

"*She* will understand it!" I said to myself, in triumph; "and to the obscure, unpoetic minds around her it will simply be a bit of fancy. What a godlike art is the poet's!" Then I sang, to a tune of my own invention,—

"Drink to her who long
Has waked the poet's sigh.
The girl who gave to song
What gold could never buy!"

Meanwhile, the week drew to an end, and as Saturday afternoon was always a holiday for the school, I had ample time to prepare myself for the visit to Cuff's. Inasmuch as the Yule family was ignorant of the proposed calcareous party, I was a

little puzzled how to get away without being observed. Also, how to get into the house, if I should not return before midnight. I made up my mind, at last, to inform Dan, upon whose silence I knew I could rely. I found him in the mill, white with the dust of floating meal, and the hopper made such a clatter that I was forced to put my mouth to his ear, and half scream the fact that I expected to be away from home in the evening. He nodded and smiled, remarking the sheepish expression of my face, and, coming close to me, said, "Shall I leave the back-entry door open?"

"And don't say anything about it, please?" I added.

His simple grin was as good as anybody else's oath; so, completely assured, I made myself ready during the afternoon, in every respect but the coat, which I whipped on after supper. Stealing out by the back-door, I jumped over the garden-wall and took my way down the valley.

It was a sharp, frosty night in the beginning of December, and I walked briskly forward, busy with

imaginary scenes and conversations, in which Amanda Bratton had an important share. It was a habit of my mind—and still is—to create all presumed situations in advance, and prepare myself for the part I expected to play in them. I must frankly confess to the reader, however, that the interference of some avenging Nemesis always darkens this voluntary clairvoyance, and spoils my tags and cues. Hence all my best remarks have never been uttered, my most brilliant humour has rusted in its sheath, and with undoubted capacity to sparkle in conversation (if the occasions would only arise as I project them in advance), I have never achieved more than an average reputation as a talker. How my anticipations on this particular evening were fulfilled, I shall now proceed to relate.

As the distance to Carterstown was four miles, Cuff's house and lime-kiln must therefore be two and a half miles from Yule's Mill, a walk of three quarters of an hour. I had not been down the road before, but I supposed that the burning kiln would be as a banner hung out, afar off, to guide my steps.

On I went, passing many houses on one side of the road, with their barns on the other, but no blue blaze showed itself, and I began to suspect that I was on the wrong road. A wide stream, coming down through the hills on the left, arrested my way, until I discovered a high log and hand-rail on one side, and felt my way over in the dark. Just beyond this stream stood another house on the left, on a bold knoll, through which the road was cut. The shrubs in the front-yard rustled darkly over the top of a lofty stone wall.

As I approached this point, a huge dog sprang down from above, and commenced barking furiously. Having no means of defence, I stood still, and the animal planted himself in the middle of the road as if determined to bar my advance. Presently I heard a whistle from the top of the wall, and a stern female voice exclaimed, "Be quiet, Roger!"

I started. It was surely the voice of Miss Verbena Cuff. The next moment she herself suddenly appeared in the road at my side, and I heard a whisper, "Is it you?"

"Yes," I said; "do you live here? I was afraid I should not find the house."

Taking my hand, she led me to a break in the wall, up which ran a steep flight of stone steps. When I had gained the top, I found myself on the knoll in front of the house, and saw a flickering cone of blue and scarlet fire at the foot of the slope beyond.

"Ain't that a blaze?" said Miss Verbena; "I never get tired a-looking at it. It's Tom's turn to tend the fire to-night, so he won't be in the way. Tom's rather rough, he is."

"Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is," I said, quoting Shelley. "It looks as if a little volcano had broken up out of the earth. See, that's the crater, at the top. Are you not afraid of the lava bursting out?"

"Go along, you!" was her answer, as she gave me a poke in the ribs. "Come in the side-door, into the sitting-room. I didn't make a fire in the parlour, because I wasn't quite sure you'd come. But I'll bring in some wood, right away, and then run up-stairs and fix myself in no time."

She ushered me into the sitting-room, which was dimly lighted by a single tallow-candle. An old woman, with a curious cap and no upper teeth, sat in a high-backed rocking-chair, knitting. She must have been very deaf, for Miss Verbena stooped down and shouted in her ear, "Mother, this is Mr. Godfrey, the schoolmaster at Yule's Mill!"

The old woman looked at me with a silly smile, nodded, and murmured to herself as she resumed her knitting, "Yes, yes; young people will be young people. I s'pose I'm in the way now."

In a few minutes she rose and retired to the kitchen, and Miss Verbena, following her, soon reappeared with an armful of sticks and chips, and a piece of candle which she managed to hold between two of her fingers. I ought to have gone and opened the parlour-door for her, but I was struck dumb at my reception, and sat like a fool while she pressed down the handle of the lock with her elbow, and pushed the door open with her foot. Good heavens! I thought, what does it all mean? There is nobody else here, and it looks as if nobody was expected!

She is making a fire in the parlour, and she is going to "fix herself in no time"—only for me? Why, when the old woman goes into the kitchen, and the big brother stays at the lime-kiln, and the young man and the young woman sit by themselves in the best parlour, it's "keeping company"—it's "court-ing!"

Instead of trembling with delight, I shivered with fear. Miss Verbena Cuff was no longer a buxom, rollicking damsel, but a young ogress, who had lured me into her den, and would tear me with relentless claws until I purchased my deliverance with sweet words and caresses. I knew that "courting" implied such familiarities; I had often heard that even candles were not necessary to its performance; and in my boyish ignorance I had always supposed that the sentiment of love, upon one side at least, must precede the custom. I did not know that in many parts of the country it was a common expedient indifferently practised, to determine whether the parties were likely to love each other. A kiss or a hug, now and then, was not looked upon as a com-

mittal of the heart to a serious attachment; such things were cheap coins, used publicly in forfeits and other games, and might be exchanged privately without loss to either's emotional property.

No; I was haunted by a softer and sweeter image than that of Verbena Cuff—a pure, ideal flame, which her lips, red and full as they were, seemed pursed to blow out. Every fibre of my heart tingled and trembled with alarm.

When she returned from the parlour, she brought her album and gave it to me. The back was covered with green and brown calico, to preserve the morocco binding. “That’s the flower I couldn’t remember,” said she, opening the book at a lithographed ranunculus; “it looks just like our butter-ball in the garden.”

On turning over the leaves, my eye caught the name of Amanda Bratton. Ah, I said to myself, let me read her selection. It commenced,—

“Verbena, when I’m far away,” &c.

“What exquisite irony!” I thought. “*She* is too cultivated to cast pearls before swine.”

All at once Tom Cuff came in, with a black jug in one hand. He twisted his mouth when he saw me, but gave me his hand, and said, "How are you, Master Godfrey?"

I returned his greeting with a dignified air.

"Sis!" he called, "more cider! It's mortal hot work, and makes a fellow dry. Bring Godfrey a swig, while you're about it."

The cider was soon forthcoming, and so sharp and hard that it made me wink. Tom took up his jug, and started, but halted at the door, and said to me, "When you're tired talking to sis, you may come down, and look at the kiln. I've put in some big chunks, and it's burnin' like all hell!"

"I'll come!" I answered; "I want to see it."

Here was a chance of escape, and I recovered my courage. I informed Miss Verbena that I would write something for her which would suit the lily of the valley. I should have preferred the verbena, but I saw that somebody had been before me—somebody, I added, who no doubt, had a better right.

"Oh, go along now! shut up! it ain't so!" cried

the energetic maiden, giving me a poke which took away my breath.

She bustled about a little more, arranging some household matters, and then came and stood before me, saying, "Now I'm done work; don't I look like a fright?"

"No: you couldn't do that if you were to try," I gallantly answered.

"None of your soft soap so soon in the evening!" she retorted. "Now I'm going up-stairs to fix. You'd better sneak into the parlour; it's nice and warm."

"I guess I'll step down and call on Tom. I want to have a look at the kiln."

"Well—don't stay more than ten minutes."

This I promised, solemnly intending to keep my word. I went out the opposite door, opened a gate in the paling, and found myself in a sloping field. The top of the kiln glimmered in wreaths of coloured flame just below me, and I could see Tom's brawny form moving about in the light which streamed from the mouth, at the foot of the knoll. I walked first

to the top, inhaled the pungent gas which arose from the calcining stones, and meditated how I should escape. The big dog had followed me, and was walking about, sniffing suspiciously, and occasionally uttering a low growl. To quiet him, first of all, I went down to Tom, took a pull at his jug, and commented on the grandeur of the fire.

"Yes, it's good now for half an hour," he said. "I'm agoin' to take a snooze. You'd better go back to the house—sis 'll be expectin' you."

"I will go *back*," I answered.

He lay down on a warm heap of sand and slaked lime, and I climbed again to the burning crest of the kiln. The big dog was there still; but I saw a fence before me, and knew that the road was beyond. I walked rapidly away, and had my hand on the topmost rail, when the beast gave a howl, and bounded after me. Over I sprang, and started to run, but I had totally forgotten that the road had been cut into the side of the knoll, leaving a bank some fifteen or twenty feet deep. My first step, therefore, touched air instead of earth: over and over I went;

crashing through briars and mullein-stalks, and loosening stones, which rattled after me, until I brought up, with a thundering shock, in the gutter below. I was on my feet in an instant, and tearing at full speed past the wall in front of the house, on the top of which I saw the dusky outline of the dog, springing towards the steps. There was a light at an upper window, and I fancied that I heard the sash raised. In less time than it has taken to write these lines, I had reached the creek and splashed through it, without taking time to find the log. The water, fortunately, was only mid-leg deep. Then I rushed forward again, stopping neither to think nor take breath, until the fainter barking of the dog showed that he had given up the chase.

How I had escaped cuts, bruises, or broken bones seemed a miracle; but I was sound in every limb. I cannot now pretend to unravel the confusion of thought in which I walked slowly homewards. Was my fine-strung, excitable nature a blessing or a curse? Had I acted as a wise man or a fool? I strongly suspected the latter; I had, at least,

betrayed a weakness at utter variance with my pretensions to manhood, and which would render it impossible for me ever again to meet either Verbena or Tom Cuff without feeling abashed and humiliated. I had run away, like a coward, from the possibility of a situation which, in itself, would have been, at the worst, a harmless diversion in the eyes of the world. I was not forced to bestow the kisses and hugs I foreboded; a little self-possession on my part was all that was necessary to give the visit a cool, Platonic character, and I should have carried home my unprofaned ideal. I imagined what Dan Yule would do in a similar case, and admitted to myself that he would get out of the scrape in a much more sensible way than I had done.

On the other hand, the afore-mentioned ideal was flattered. I had saved it from even the suspicion of danger—had braved ridicule, worse than hostility, for the sake of keeping it pure. I was made of better clay than the men around me, and ought to be proud of it.

When I reached home, the family had not yet

gone to bed. Nevertheless, I entered by the back-entry door, which I found unlocked, stole to my room, kindled a fire, and changed my coat—my best coat, alas! which was much soiled, and torn in two or three places. When I had become composed, I went down to the kitchen, on the pretence of getting a glass of water, but in reality to make the family suppose that I had been spending the evening in my own room.

Dan looked at me with a very queer expression, but he asked me no questions, and it was many days before I confided to him my adventure.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH LOVE AND LITERATURE STIMULATE
EACH OTHER.

IT must not be supposed that my literary ambition had slumbered during all this time. Some four or five of my poems had been published—the last two, to my great satisfaction, without editorial correction ; and, moreover, a story of the colonial days, entitled “ The Wizard of Perkiomen,” was announced as accepted. My first timidity to be known as an author was rapidly wearing away. I began to wish that somebody would suspect me of being “ Selim ;” but alas ! who was there of sufficient taste and penetration to make the discovery ? Would not Miss Amanda Bratton, at least, recognize in the “ Parable ” I had written for her album the same strings

which vibrated in the "Unknown Bard?" To make assurance doubly sure, however, I attached to the next poem I forwarded to Philadelphia, after the signature of "Selim," the local address, "Yule's Mill, Berks County, Pa." This would settle the matter for ever.

My mind the more easily habituated itself to literary expression from the isolation, whether real or imagined, in which I lived. I learned to confide to paper the thoughts which I judged no one around me (except, perhaps, *one* whom I dared not approach) was worthy to share. My treasures accumulated much more rapidly than I could dispose of them; but I looked upon them as so much available capital, to be used at the proper time. I had no further doubt of my true vocation, but what rank I should attain in it was a question which sometimes troubled me. I lacked patience to toil for years in obscurity, looking forward to the distant day when recognition *must* come, because it had been fairly earned. My energy was of that kind which flags without immediate praise.

There was now, as the reader may have suspected, an additional spur to my impatience. My heart was pitched to the key of a certain sweet, subdued, even-toned voice. I was jubilant with the consciousness that the one passion which is not only permitted to authors, but is considered actually necessary to their development, had come at last to quicken and inspire me. It was a vague, misty, delicious sensation, scorning to be put into tangible form, or to clothe its yearnings with the material aspects of life. There was poison in the thought of settlements, income, housekeeping details; I turned away with an inward shudder, if such things were accidentally suggested to my mind. My love nourished itself upon dew, odours, and flute-like melodies.

I took the album back to Miss Amanda with a tremor of mingled doubt and hope. She read the lines slowly, and as she approached the bottom of the page I turned away my eyes and waited, with my heart in my mouth, for her voice.

"Oh, it is *so* pretty!" she said; "there is nothing

so nice in the book. You *do* write beautifully, Mr. Godfrey. Have you composed anything for Verbena Cuff?"

She put the question in a careless way, which satisfied me that there was not the least jealousy or selfishness in her nature. So far as my hopes were concerned, I should have been better satisfied if she had betrayed a slight tinge of the former emotion; but, on after-reflection, I decided that I liked her all the better for the unsuspicious truth and frankness of her nature.

"I couldn't avoid it, you know, after promising," I said.

"I wish you would let me see it."

"I have no copy with me," I replied; "but I have the lines in my head. I wrote them for the lily of the valley, which, you know, means 'Humility':—

"My dwelling is the forest shade,
Beside the streamlet wandering free;
'Tis there, in modest green arrayed,
I hide my blossoms from the bee.

“But thou dost make the garden fair,
Where noonday sunbeams round thee fall;
How should the shrinking Lily dare
To hear the gay Verbena's call?”

You notice the irony?”

“Yes,” she answered, after a pause. “It's a shame.” But she smiled sweetly, as she said so.

“Oh, you don't know,” I cried, in transport—you don't know, Miss Bratton, how grateful it is to find a mind that can understand you! To find intelligence, and poetic feeling, and—and——”

I paused, not knowing how to make the climax.

“Yes,” she replied, casting down her eyes, and with a mournful inflection of voice which went to my soul, “I understand it, from my own experience.”

What more I should have said, with this encouragement, I know not, for Mrs. Bratton put her head into the room, announcing, “Tea, 'Manda. Mr. Godfrey, will you *set by*?”

This was one of her peculiar phrases, which would have provoked my mirth, had she not been the mother of her daughter. But, as she was, I thought

it quaint and original. Another expression was, "*Take off* some o' the butter," or whatever dish it might be. I accepted the invitation, although my pleasure at having my tea "seasoned" by Miss Amanda was greatly lessened by the presence of young Sep, in a state of exhilaration. He had just come up from the Buck Tavern, and was in a humour for any devilment. It pleased him, in addressing me, to abbreviate my family name in a way which made his remarks seem shockingly profane. This he thought the perfection of wit, and he roared every time he uttered it.

Miss Amanda looked pained, as well she might be, and over and over again, exclaimed, "Don't, Sep!"—but to no purpose. I thought this was bad enough, but worse was to come.

"I say,——," (I will not write the syllable he used), "I saw Tom Cuff at 'The Buck,' to-day. He says the lime-kiln's done burning." Then he winked at me, and burst into a hoarse laugh.

I sat, frozen with horror.

"Lime-kiln?" was all I could say, hoping my con-

fusion might pass for ignorance in the pale, steady eyes which must certainly be fixed on my face.

"You didn't know they had one, I reckon!" he continued. "Well—I won't tell tales out of school, even against the schoolmaster."

I caught Miss Amanda's look, which asked, "What does he mean?" Explanation, however, was impossible at the time, and I said nothing. Sep's thoughts presently turned into another channel, and my torment ceased, though not my apprehensions as to the impression he had produced on somebody else.

I did not dare to call too frequently, and several days elapsed before I could make an explanation. I approached the subject clumsily enough, feeling that my allusion to it was a half-confession of misdemeanour, yet too disturbed to take the opposite course, and ignore it. Of course, I omitted the catastrophe of the evening, making the album account for my visit, and hinting, as delicately as possible, that I had expected to meet Miss Bratton at Cuff's. How I was relieved to find that I had misinterpreted the latter's glance at the tea-table! She had at-

tached no meaning to her brother's remark—had, in fact, forgotten all about it! Now that I mentioned the matter, she had an indistinct recollection of something about Tom Cuff and a lime-kiln; but Sep had such a way of blurting out everything that came into his head! She knew, moreover, how “people” always talked, making mountains out of mole-hills; but Verbena Cuff was reckoned to be quite a nice girl, and I need not object to have it known that I visited her now and then.

I affirmed, with great earnestness, that I hoped I should never see her again.

“Why, you seem to have quite a prejudice against her, Mr. Godfrey,” said Miss Amanda. “She is a good-hearted creature, I assure you, with, perhaps, a little—though it may be wrong in me to say it—a *little* want of polish. That is a common want in Upper Samaria, however, and maybe we *all* have it in *your* eyes.”

“Oh, Miss Amanda—Miss Bratton!” I remonstrated, “not *all*! You are unjust to yourself, and to me, if you imagine I could think so. Your generosity will

not allow you to admit Verbena Cuff's coarseness and boldness of manner; you cannot feel the contrast as *I* do. It is just because *some others* are cultivated, and refined, and pure-spirited, that her ignorance is so repulsive to me!"

She cast down her eyes, and was silent for a minute. Then she spoke in that gentle, deliberate way which so charmed me: "Ye-es, there are others who have risen above those who surround them. You will find them here and there."

This was taking up my words altogether too literally. I had spoken, it is true, in the plural, but my heart meant a singular. In her perfect modesty—her ignorance of her own spiritual value—she had misunderstood me. I did not admire her the less for this quality, though I felt that all my indirect professions, hitherto, must have failed to reach her maidenly consciousness.

While I was uneasily shifting my cap from one hand to another, uncertain whether to continue the subject, or give our conversation another direction, she took up a paper which lay on the table beside

her, unfolded it, and asked with a bewitching air of pleasantry—

“ Mr. Godfrey, do you know who ‘Selim’ is?”

I had not yet received my copy from the post-office at Cardiff, and was therefore ignorant that my poem, entitled “The Lament of Hero, after the Drowning of Leander,” commencing—

“ Ah, howl ye Hellespontic waves!”

had been printed in the number for that week; but a glance at the first page, as she held it towards me, showed the success of my stratagem. I was discovered at last. There, under “Selim,” was the address, “Yule’s Mill, Berks County.” I will not describe my sensations at that moment. I have understood ever since how a young girl must feel when the man her heart has chosen unexpectedly declares his own attachment.

“ Have you read it? Do you like it?” I breathlessly asked.

“ Yes, indeed—it is *lovely*! I knew you must be a poet, Mr. Godfrey. I saw the Belvidere Bard at

Bethlehem. He visited our school ; and he had eyes with the same expression as you have. There's something about poets that distinguishes them from common people."

My own thought! Was I not, like Byron, not altogether made of such mean clay as rots into the souls of those whom I survey? And she, who stood as far above the rest of her sex in that secluded valley, as I stood above mine, was the first—the only one—to recognize my nobility. Only the exiled Princess knew, under his rags, the lofty bearing of the exiled Prince! Oh, could I but woo her to return my sprouting love, I would immortalize her in future song—she should be my Hinda, my Medora, my Astarte, my Ellen of the Lake! After Burns and his Highland Mary, should be written the names of Godfrey and his Amanda.

There was no end, that night, to my preposterous dreams. As I recall them, I know not whether to weep or laugh. The puny lily of my imaginative faculty seemed destined to fill the world with its fragrance,

and I could not see that it was rooted, no less than the pig-weed, in the common mud. I had yet to learn that the finer clay, upon which I congratulated myself, is more easily soiled by the Devil's fingers than one of coarser grit—that neither do such natures as mine monopolize the beauty, the romance, and the tragedy of life, nor are they exempt from the temptations which assail the ignorant, the excesses committed by the vulgar.

The tidings that “the schoolmaster wrote verses for the papers” were soon spread through the neighbourhood. I cannot, to this day, decide whether it was an advantage to my reputation among the people, or the reverse. On the one hand, they had little respect for any talent which did not take a practical direction; on the other, they vaguely felt that it was a certain sort of distinction. The Yules, and others, borrowed my copy of the paper, and, I am bound to believe, dutifully read the poem. Dan was honest enough to confess to me: “It’s a pretty jingle, but I can’t say as I know what it all means.” The girls, I did not fail to observe, were

much more impressed by the discovery than the young men.

By degrees, however, I received encouraging notices of one kind or another. The shoemaker at "The Buck," an old Scotchman, who knew Burns by heart and sneered at Homer and Shakspeare, was one of my first admirers; but he used to say, "Ye ha'n't got the *lilt*, lad,"—which was very true, only I didn't believe him at the time. Squire Bratton, being one day at Carterstown, brought me a message from the Rev. Mr. Perego, to the effect that I would find sublime subjects for my muse in the Scriptures: he suggested Moses on Pisgah, and the visit of Naaman to Elisha. I did, indeed, commence a poem on the former subject, out of pure gratitude for the clergyman's interest—but this was an insufficient inspiration, and the work was never finished. Then I received many applications to write obituary verses, made from so evident a piety towards the dead, and with such sincere good faith in my powers, that I had not the heart to refuse. I have no doubt that some of my manuscripts are still preserved between

the leaves of old family Bibles, in Upper Samaria. The applications for album poetry, at first so agreeable, became at last a positive annoyance, because my poetic apostrophes to Youth and Beauty were always taken in a literal and personal sense. One day, in sheer desperation, I wrote in a volume sent to me, through Susan Yule, by a young lady of Cardiff—

“Oh, fair Unknown! believe my simple rhyme:
Procrastination is the thief of time.”

The lady, of whose age and circumstances I was utterly ignorant, happened to be verging on ancient maidenhood, much to her own disgust, and immediately suspected me of a malicious insinuation. She tore out and burned the leaf, and within three days, Mrs. Yule picked up a report that I had written something unmentionably coarse and profane. It must have been generally believed, for I received very few albums afterwards.


During this time the number of my pupils had been gradually increasing, until there were fre-

quently between forty and fifty present at once, and all my youthful authority was required to preserve even tolerable order. I had little trouble with the oldest and the youngest, but the cubs between twelve and sixteen sometimes drove me nearly to distraction. Keeping them in after school hours, was more of an annoyance to myself than to them; I had a dislike to bodily punishment, although it was well merited, and allowed by the custom of the country; and, moreover, to confess the truth, I did not feel sure of my ability to suppress a well-organised plan of rebellion. Towards the end of the winter, I had reason to believe that a "barring out" was really contemplated, and communicated my suspicions to Dan Yule, who was my confidant in all external matters. Dan took the matter much more coolly than I did. "Boys will be boys," said he; "they do it every winter;—fact is, I've had a hand in it myself. But if you want to fix 'em, I'll put you up to a trick worth two o' their'n."

This struck me as better than resistance; so, prompted by Dan, I procured some large iron spikes,

and prepared oblique holes in the window frames to receive them. The window shutters consisted of a single piece, bolted on the inside. I also went into the loft and bored a small hole through the plaster of the ceiling, just over the stove. Then, with tranquillity of soul, I waited for the event.

On Saturday morning, the closed shutters of the school-house announced to me that the barring-out had commenced. I tried to open the door, but found it firmly fastened on the inner side. Then I went to each of the four windows, pretending to examine them, but really inserting my spikes. When this was done, I locked the door from without, and with a stone, drove the spikes home. The boys thought I was attempting to force an entrance: I could hear their malicious laughter. When all was secure, I took a rail from the fence and placed it against the gable. It reached so near the little garret window that I easily effected an entrance, and stole quietly along the middle joist to the hole in the ceiling. The boys were at the windows, trying to catch a glimpse of me through the cracks under the shutters. It was



a favourable moment. I hastily poured the contents of a small paper of ground cayenne pepper down through the hole upon the stove, slipped back again, replaced the rail, and gave a few more thumps on the window shutters by way of farewell.

Dan could not resist the temptation to lurk and listen after I reported that the work was done, and his description, that evening, of the sneezes and cries of distress; the swagger of some boys and the penitence of others; the consultations and the final determination to surrender; the bewilderment and dumb dismay at finding that they had not only barred the master out, but the master had barred them in—occasioned more laughter in the family than I had heard since I came to live with them. The efforts of the boys to get out lasted for some time, and was only accomplished at last by wrenching one of the shutters off its hinges. Then they scattered to their several homes, very sheepish and crestfallen.

On the following Monday I opened school as usual. There was a curious expectancy among the pupils,

but I made not the slightest allusion, then or afterwards, to the Saturday's performance. Dan told the whole story at the Buck, and it was some time before the boys heard the last of it. I had much less difficulty, thenceforth, in preserving order.

As week after week of the winter passed away, and my thoughts turned from the memory of autumn to the hope of spring, the temporary character of my occupation forced itself more and more upon my attention. In a short time my engagement would be at an end, and I was less than ever in the humour to renew it. What the next step should be, was yet undecided, except that it must be forward and upward into a wider sphere of action.

END OF VOL. I.







